

School of Theology at Claremont



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The
SOCIAL PROBLEM
for
CHRISTIAN CITIZENS

By
WILL REASON, M. A.



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**THE SOCIAL PROBLEM
FOR CHRISTIAN CITIZENS**

Pres. W. R.

THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

FOR

CHRISTIAN CITIZENS

BY

WILL REASON, M.A.

LONDON

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES

F. B. MEYER, MEMORIAL HALL, E.C.

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

PREFACE

THE responsibility for this book is divided. The National Free Church Council desired a book which would deliver the beginner from the bewilderment occasioned by the multitude of volumes on many aspects of the Social Question, and provide him with an introduction to the whole matter in small compass and at moderate cost, while dealing with it directly from the Christian point of view. The Council must therefore bear the responsibility for this attempt to put, not a quart merely, but many gallons into a pint pot.

On the other hand, the author has been allowed to deal with the subject in his own way, and is alone accountable for the views expressed. It has been his aim, however, to present the facts and the issues raised by them as impartially as is possible to partial humanity, rather than to express his own views as to their solution.

No one can be more conscious than himself of the inadequacy of the present volume to do more than introduce the reader to the subject, and of the enormous omissions which have had to be made in order to keep within the prescribed limits. It is

hoped that no one will imagine that he "understands the Social Problem" when he has finished these pages, but that all will go on to study its different aspects with a reasonably clear idea of the main issues. The little bibliographies for each chapter at the end will be found useful for guidance in further study.

The arrangement of the book has been devised with a view to the convenience of Study Circles, and it is suggested that the closing section of each chapter should be used as the subject for a few minutes' simple, perhaps silent prayer, at the end of each session, in order to relate what has been discussed definitely to the Will of God.

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THE SOCIAL PROBLEM FOR CHRISTIAN CITIZENS

CHAPTER I

POVERTY IN GENERAL

THE Social Problem may be summed up in the one word, "Poverty," used in the modern sense. That is to say, if by a stroke of some magician's wand the complex condition we call by that name could be removed, the Social Question would be gone also. This does not mean that the Millennium would have come, for there are many other things which spoil our lives and prevent that Divine order which is the Kingdom of God. There are many sins and sorrows which do not originate in poverty, and would not therefore be destroyed with it, though they might take very different shapes. Still, the abolition of economic misery would be a tremendous step. It is necessary, therefore, before examining the different separate questions of which the Social Problem is composed, to take a broad view of poverty in general. But we must be clear as to what we actually mean by the term.

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Poverty and Money.—The material means of life are purchasable by money, and in our civilisation they are not usually obtainable without it. Moreover, money being exchangeable for all these things, it is convenient to use its terms as a kind of shorthand expression for the things themselves. Whoever has money can get without trouble anything out of any shop ; so he is called poor or rich according to the amount he has at his disposal. But while this is a real convenience in ordinary conversation, it has its dangers in a study of poverty itself, for two main reasons.

First, money will not feed or clothe or give house-room by itself. It is merely what economists call a medium of exchange, and is only useful as we part with it in order to get the meat, the garments, the houses, &c., which do the actual ministering to our life. It is quite possible to have plenty of money without being able to exchange it for goods, and on the other hand to have abundance of the necessities of life without a single coin. Though these extreme cases are so unusual in present conditions as to be apparently not worth mentioning, it is yet important for clearness of thought always to think of a poor man as one who has not enough to eat or to wear, whose house or tenement fails to give him health, and so on. For we shall see when we consider the Housing Question that it is lack of suitable houses rather than a small money-wage that causes many families to be overcrowded, and there are neighbourhoods where a man may be rich in access to books though he cannot afford to buy them for his shelves. But the chief force of the present argument is that the nature of poverty

can only be understood by thinking in terms of life instead of in abstractions.

Secondly, money terms are deceptive, even as shorthand expressions, unless used with the greatest care, because they do not mean the same thing at all times and in all places. For example, in the days when the Authorised Translation of the Bible was made, two pence seemed quite a reasonable sum for the kind-hearted Samaritan to give to the innkeeper to spend on the injured man, and therefore fitly translated the names of the coins in the Greek. But to-day the sum is ridiculously inadequate, though the human needs have remained the same. In our own time, a money income which lifts a man above poverty in England, leaves him below the line in South Africa or the United States. And again, in both our place and time, we are constantly hearing that working men in general are poorer to-day than they were twelve years ago, because, although wages are much the same or even a little higher here and there, prices have risen, and a sovereign will not purchase as much of the means of life as then. So that to take only the money income is not only an artificial but also an unsafe way of measuring poverty.

Poverty and Riches.—There is also a certain convenience in taking poverty and riches as the contrasted conditions, but here, too, clearness of thought is greatly needed. Such usage may be justified in many conversational expressions, but it leads us away from the true standard. Indeed, it does not give any standard at all; for the same person may be rich or poor according to the possessions of other people with

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whom he is compared. The casual labourer would consider a man with £200 a year as rich ; the upper middle class and those more wealthy still would regard him as wretchedly poor. But the real question is whether his own needs are met or not ; whether he is adequately fed, clothed, housed, educated, &c. It is a question of adequacy, not of an indefinitely expanding possibility of luxury.

There is also a very serious fallacy which comes into our thought with this commonly accepted contrast of poverty with riches. It is that, because the means of life are so necessary that their absence is injurious, therefore the more we have of them the better off we shall be. This is not true to fact. After we have eaten enough food to maintain health, we do not get more strength by continuing to eat. On the contrary, we impair our digestions, and actually diminish our powers. After we have put on sufficient clothing for warmth, we do not increase our comfort or wellbeing by putting on more, but only make the body effeminate, or even render ourselves miserable. In fact, if there is any truth in the saying that you cannot have too much of a good thing, it is because things are *not* good as soon as the amount of them exceeds the proper measure. It is probably not so much the excess of goods as the power over other people's lives conferred by riches which is their chief attraction.

Poverty then is not to be contrasted with varying degrees of abundance, but with a definite condition of sufficiency. It can only be understood when considered in direct relation with life itself.

Definition of Poverty.—Mr. Stopford Brooke has given us a definition of poverty which summarises the ideas underlying the foregoing considerations. It is : “That condition in which for want of means no just development of the natural powers of any man or woman can be reached.”

This definition points out the true answer to a modern critic of social reform who has argued its uselessness from the fact that the rich are no better morally and no happier than the poor. No one ought to want to make the poor rich, but simply to put them in a condition in which their powers of life are not weakened and destroyed by lack of means. If that can be accomplished the social wrong done to them will have been wiped out, and the responsibility of the proper use of their powers will rest upon themselves. For there is no compulsion upon those with ample means to indulge in excess ; the possibilities of a simple and healthy life are open to them by the exercise of self-control, and superabundance can always find an outlet in expenditure which is helpful to others. But with the poor the very essence of the problem is that the full amount of what is necessary to effective life is beyond their reach, and their condition is not a matter of their own choice. Of course, if it were true, as some still like to think, that their deprivation is really a consequence of idleness or some other fault which is within their power to remedy, there would be no Social Question at all. But this is abandoned by all serious students of social conditions, and the reasons will be given in the next chapter. Here it is enough to say that for great masses of our population the con-

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dition of poverty is unavoidable, while the rich can always limit their expenditure as they choose. It may also be fairly asserted in further answer to the criticism noted above, that those who have sufficient and do not indulge in excess are undoubtedly both better and happier as a class than either the poverty-stricken or the luxurious.

Poverty not Merely Lack.—There remains one more point in this general consideration of poverty, which is of great importance, though too often overlooked. It is that in the condition known by that word in modern civilisation there is not only the lack of necessities, but the presence of what may be called positive evils. That is to say, life is not only starved, but it is poisoned and corroded. The closely packed populations of our cities have to struggle against foul atmosphere, legions of disease germs, and a flood of general dirt which makes cleanliness in their homes only achievable by prolonged and heroic resistance. They suffer more through being compelled to live in the wrong kind of house than if they had no houses at all. They do not merely fail to get sufficient food, but through ignorance and helplessness, they get food of the wrong kind and often of an adulterated and harmful nature. Their clothing is not merely scanty and without the advantages of change, but it comes to them having passed through many hands, and too often bears with it seeds from the diseases of former users.

The irony of it is that the modern life of poverty is not cheap, but very costly. A peasant living on the mountain side can do with very little, and be a sturdy specimen of mankind. His productiveness soon

passes the cost of maintenance. But the cost of maintaining our city poor is very great both to themselves and to the community. They pay directly in rent, including rates, and often in locomotion, as much as will keep the peasant entirely, and the community has to find large sums for paving, lighting, drainage, education, &c. There must be added to this the cost of police, poor-law administration, and other public charges made necessary by the massing of our population in large towns, and the huge amount spent in hospitals, almshouses and other forms of charity which have become a regular part of our social machinery. What the poor and the community have to bear, therefore, is not merely the absence of the simple necessities of life in sufficient quantities, but the burden of costly evils and the attempted palliatives.

The extent of Poverty.—For a long time it was believed that only a small portion of the nation was in severe poverty; and even now, in spite of all that has been written as the result of investigation, it is probable that only a comparatively few have grasped the true state of the case. But the researches of Messrs. Booth and Rowntree, followed by many other investigators, leave little room for doubt that in our large towns at least one-fourth and often one-third of the population is living with insufficient income to provide the means for mere physical efficiency. Mr. Rowntree has done splendid service in working out a practical standard by which to measure this sufficiency or insufficiency of income, and has been careful to avoid any error on the side of excess. In fact, it is clear that his "Poverty Line"

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is really drawn considerably too low. If we were to revise it at all, we should have to raise it so as to include a larger proportion of the population still.

It is true that the method of direct investigation has only been applied to parts; it would be very costly to take a direct poverty-census of the entire population. But all the other lines of investigation converge to the same result. The Death Duties and the Income Tax Returns show how ample is the room for this mass of poverty. A Wages Census by Sir Robert Giffen in 1886 showed that 57·6 per cent. of the men were employed at a rate not exceeding 25s. a week, and 99 per cent. of the women received no more. This he believed was fairly representative of the whole nation. Professor Bowley in a quite recent estimate found that two and a half million adult male wage-earners are receiving not more than 25s. weekly, and that one million of these received 20s. and under. These were all in steady employment. Below them is the vast multitude of irregular and casual workers.

Of course there are very many families that seem to be reared in efficiency and decency on such small incomes, but other lines of research show that the toll of sickness and mortality is very great, and certainly it cannot be said "the just development of their powers" has been reached.

The Christian Point of View.—How does this poverty appear when looked at in the light of Christ's teaching? It is true that He said, "Blessed are ye poor,"¹ but it has already been shown that the condition we

¹ Luke vi. 20.

have to deal with is not the mere lack of superfluities which, if accepted in spirit, leads to simpler and sincerer life. It is life made meagre, warped and poisoned ; and He said He came "that they might have Life and have it abundantly."¹ That this is life in its spiritual content is certainly true, but the contention that clean and healthful physical life is a precedent condition is not a modern gloss on His teaching, but an original and integral element. Space can be found here for only one citation in evidence of this, but it is singularly cogent. For we are solemnly told that the final test of our belonging to His Kingdom is the reaction of our life in the presence of poverty. If in the presence of the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the sick and the degenerate we are moved to remedy these evils, we belong ; if we are not so moved, we are far from Him.²

These evils of destitution are definitely recognised moreover as foes of the kingdom. However possible or even necessary it may be to carry the terms which describe them into the spiritual sphere, it is certain that there is no justification for omitting their primary physical significance. In taking steps to remedy them we are doing His work, and ministering to Himself. It is remarkable how these definite categories of poverty make up our social problem to-day. All our difficulties as to employment and wages, all our housing perplexities, our troubles concerning disease and dangerous employments, our problem of pauperism, crime and degeneracy, range round these primary needs of food, clothing, home, health and

¹ John x. 10.

² Matt. xxv. 31-46.

character. Together they make up what has been called "the Condition-of-the-People Question."

In a simple form of society the remedy for individual want might be found in individual helpfulness, and the place for this will never disappear. But in our complex civilisation it is not enough. The causes of distress have to be sought not only in the immediate circumstances of individuals, but in deep-lying social conditions also. The point need not be laboured here. It will become increasingly evident with the study of each succeeding chapter. To feed the hungry we must be prepared not merely to give a meal to those temporarily in want, but to reorganise conditions so that the great numbers who are chronically underfed may be put into a position to earn their own bread, and similarly with regard to all the other needs of life. That is to say, we must not merely seek to alleviate symptoms; we must search out and remove the root causes of distress. The methods appropriate to this are open to much economic and political discussion, but the object itself is set before us by Christ in terms which we cannot reject.

CHAPTER II

CHARACTER AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

THERE seems to be a general unwillingness to recognise the complexity of the relation between Poverty and Character. On the one hand, all economic distress is referred to some shortcoming in the sufferers themselves ; they must be idle, or thriftless, or incompetent, or wastrels in some way. This is an extremely old view, which can be found stated with much force in the Book of Job, which seems to have been largely written in refutation of it. It appeals with almost irresistible power to those who have been successful, and know that in that success their own industry, sobriety, forethought and watchfulness for opportunity have played a great part, and who are perhaps naturally inclined to be oblivious of those conditions which gave these virtues ample scope. On the other hand, many who have concentrated attention on the conditions themselves, and have seen the tragic overwhelming of people of all kinds of character in the common social disaster, are inclined to be contemptuous of any endeavour to give character a place in the examination of the Social Problem. The facts cannot be reduced into

either simple formula, but must be considered in a number of different aspects before a just and proportioned conclusion can be reached.

Poverty as a Result of Character.—It is undeniable that some people do bring poverty upon themselves, when in other respects they have had the same external opportunities as others. We are not concerned to pass personal judgment on them, and can fully accept the saying, "To know all is to forgive all." What we are concerned with is the simple fact that it is something in themselves, however it may be accounted for, that has brought them and those connected with them to want. The cases are too many and too glaring to be explained away. Drink, gambling, and vice have undoubtedly broken up many homes, and thrown otherwise capable wage-earners into the ranks of the unemployable. While it is unfair to say of all of these that they need not have been in poverty if they had not indulged in these vices, it is certainly true that in a large number of instances they have been brought down from positions of comfort as an immediate consequence of these bad habits.

It must also be recognised that very many are in the receipt of incomes which are in themselves sufficient for that "physical efficiency" which Mr. Rowntree makes the determining factor in drawing the "Poverty Line," but by the expenditure on wasteful or even hurtful things they reduce the amount available for necessities below the proper margin. Mr. Charles Booth found drink and thriftlessness to be the cause of being "very poor" in

14 per cent. of the cases he examined, and the cause of being "poor" in the case of 13 per cent. But these figures include only those instances in which it was the principal cause; "as contributory cause it would no doubt be connected with a much larger proportion."¹

Strong confirmation of this is found in the experience of Liverpool during the troubles incident to the transport workers' strike. The magistrates closed the public-houses during the hours mostly given to heavy drinking, with the result that many families, in spite of the distress, actually deposited more in the Savings' Banks and reduced their indebtedness to tradesmen in greater amount than at normal times.

The general facts must be admitted, but they must be put into proper relation with other facts, which we proceed to consider.

Poverty not caused by Character.—After recognising Mr. Charles Booth's percentages for drink and thriftlessness, and allowing for their probable increase when these causes are combined with others, his analysis reveals a much larger proportion of poverty which is primarily due to causes which are not personal. For in the case of the very poor he finds that 55 per cent. were in that condition through "questions of employment," and 27 per cent. through "questions of circumstance," by which he means, illness, misfortune, large families, &c. In the case of the poor, the figures are 68 per cent. and 19 per cent. respectively. It is, of course, open to the out-and-out advocate of the "bad character" theory to

¹ "Life and Labour, &c.," vol. i. p. 146 f.

assert that before sobriety and thrift these questions would disappear; but even in face of these figures alone that is rather a difficult proposition to maintain, and there are other considerations which rule it out altogether.

There are a number of Trade Unions which give unemployment benefits to their members, and the figures recording these are collected by the Board of Trade. Unfortunately these relate only to a small part of the wage-earners generally, but they are sufficient for the present purpose. These statistics show that unemployment varies in extent from month to month and from year to year, not only in separate trades, but in industry generally. For example, in 1894 the mean rate of unemployment in these unions was 6.9 per cent. Trade improved, and the unemployment figure fell gradually until in 1899 it was 2.4 per cent. Then it rose, until in 1904 it was 6.5 per cent. It decreased again, but rose once more in 1909 to very nearly 9 per cent.

Can these figures be explained by the character of the unemployed? One would have to maintain the absurdity that the morals of the workers were very bad in 1894, in 1904, and in 1909, while repentance and amendment brought them to spells of greatest virtue in 1899 and the other years when the rate was low.

The unwary are confused by the undoubted fact that when stress does occur, it is the inferior worker, either in skill or character, that is dismissed. But this would naturally take place in any case. Employers will of course retain, as a rule, those who are most useful to them. The point is, that when orders con-

tract some one has to go, and it is not a question of how many, but which. If the standard of skill and character were raised all round, so that the worst men became equal to what the best had been, that would make no difference to the amount of work in the factory or yard, and still the worst would have to go, however good they might be in themselves.

We return to Professor Bowley's figures, quoted in the last chapter. From these it appears that a million workers in regular employment are paid at rates under 20s. a week. This includes a number of railwaymen, drivers of carts, and similar occupations, which are absolutely necessary to the community. Besides these there are vast numbers of dockers and others whose earnings are irregular, and average out at less than a pound a week. The contention of those who pay these rates is not that they would pay more if these men were of better character; it is that the industry will not afford higher rates of pay. If it be contended that superior men can always get better paid jobs, the question remains, Who then would do this necessary work if the present drivers, shunters, dockers, scavengers, &c., all qualified themselves for these more remunerative occupations? For the more highly paid jobs would soon come to an end if the more lowly were not done by some one.

It is surely clear that we must admit vast economic causes of poverty, which seem by the facts at our disposal to be more widely responsible even than the character of the workers themselves.

Character as affected by Poverty.—The next point is that, allowing the existence of much in the workers

themselves which accounts for indigence, how far is this defective character due to the condition of poverty itself? The Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration has this significant passage: "The close connection between a craving for drink and bad housing, bad feeding, a polluted and depressing atmosphere, long hours of work in overheated and often ill-ventilated rooms, only relieved by the excitements of town life, is too self-evident to need demonstration, nor, unfortunately, is the extent of the evil more open to dispute." "Not only is poverty the result of drink, but it becomes an active agent in promoting it."

Many instances could be cited to show that excessive drinking goes with certain trades; that among women the drink habit increases in towns generally, and especially in those towns where women form a large proportion of the workers in the factories. It must be remembered that the vast number of the poor do not fall into that condition, but are born into it. From their birth they live in crowded rooms, must find their playground in the streets, and in older life their recreations in artificially provided ways. The general greyness of their surroundings, the monotony and often severity of their toil, lead them to find relief in crude excitements or in the temporary oblivion which, in the recent words of a judge, is "the shortest way out of Manchester."

Overcrowding leads to other forms of vice besides the drink habit—vice which has no direct bearing perhaps on questions of employment, but indirectly contributes greatly to general unfitness. The under-

feeding and bad feeding to which children are subject in poor homes, the early toil to which so many are still accustomed, and the absence of privacy, which forces upon them all the sights and sounds of evil that are about them, cannot fail to have disastrous effects upon character, if we allow any force to our usual notions of cause and effect. How many, even of the most ardent supporters of the "they-could-if-they-would" theory, would allow their little ones to be taken away and reared in these conditions?

Unemployment, again, is a great solvent of character. Not only is the physical frame weakened by underfeeding, but the moral fibre also is subject to great strain. The growing feeling that one is superfluous tends to undermine self-respect; the enforced periods of idleness sap the power of continuous work; resentment against the social conditions which refuse employment loosens the ties of citizenship, and too often recourse to charity becomes a confirmed habit. Add to this that the public-house is in so many cases the only social meeting-place, and that the prevailing mode of showing sympathy with a man that is "down on his luck" is to offer him a drink, and it is easy to understand how so many good and steady workmen are spoilt by repeated spells of unemployment.

Character Improved by Better Conditions.—On the other hand, there is a considerable amount of evidence that much can be accomplished by improving conditions. The great work done by Dr. Barnardo's Homes, where waifs are continually taken off the streets, shows a wonderful record in this respect. The percentage of failures among those who have been

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first cared for in body, mind, and character, and then sent to a new world of ampler opportunity in Canada, is surprisingly small, especially when it is remembered that many of these children have had a prolonged experience of street life, and are often suffering from disease when admitted. Other evidence can be gathered from school-feeding, where not only the physique but the manners of the children have been improved, and the open-air schools, where backward and dull children become, as the late Mr. A. Holden Byles reported, "not only brighter, more alert, and of quicker intelligence, but they are more cleanly in their habits, more orderly, more attentive, more unselfish."¹

But even with grown-up folk conditions which allow of a larger hope are found effective in improving character. The Raffeisen and other co-operative banks on the Continent have been known to transform whole villages, and in many cases increased opportunities for leisure and other betterment of circumstance have lessened drunkenness and steadied character. Time must, of course, be allowed for these effects to become evident. Opportunities are often misused at first, as in the case of Bank Holidays. But the adjustment comes, and ample evidence can be brought for this double truth, that bad conditions mean lowered character, and better conditions mean improved character. But it must always be remembered that by better conditions is meant not increase of luxury, but better scope for those qualities which are desirable.

¹ *World's Work*—The Open Air School, Jan. 1909.

The Christian Point of View.—Character is the chief, even the sole object of all reform, from the Christian standpoint. The end aimed at is the production of men and women of the best kind. We have only to do with circumstances as they help or hinder this. That they do help or hinder can only be denied by those who are obsessed by a preconceived theory.

To admit this is in no way to deny that character *ought* to be superior to external circumstances. When the spirit is strong in a man he will order his own circumstances, or at least triumph in his inner being over external conditions. But the trouble is that very few are so developed in spirit as to do this. Each has a certain measure of self-control, small in some, greater in others, but in none of us indefinitely great. To allow a crushing load upon this feeble power is "to break the bruised reed, and to quench the dimly burning wick."¹ What is needed is to give the required scope, and then to develop the responsibility.

Nor do we thus admit that circumstances can create character. But though they are not *creative* of character, they are *selective*. A gardener never claims to have created the floral life which makes his garden beautiful, but he does arrange the circumstances so that he has grass on his lawns instead of dandelions, and the flowers he desires in the beds instead of weeds. Our extremes of luxury on the one hand, and penury on the other, give too much scope to the undesirable qualities of humanity.

From this point of view it is a very pertinent question for Christians, whether many of the

¹ Isaiah xlii. 3 ; Matt. xii. 20.

characteristics, for lack of which the poor are often reproached, and which seem the most conducive to "independence," are really the best from the simple point of view of human life; whether the competitive system, at least in its present form, does not develop the self-regarding qualities at the expense of the other-regarding. Are, for instance, those who have worked their way up from poverty really better men and women than those who have in many instances remained in it? The generosity of the poor to each other is known to all who have lived with them. It prevents their laying up for themselves, so as to get a footing on the industrial ladder. Are they really worse than those who have kept their pennies till they became pounds, and so took the earliest chance of becoming employers instead of being employed?

More important still, from the Christian point of view, is the effect of *our* character upon the poor. We are very ready with criticism and blame for those who are in poverty, but the sins of greed, injustice, and indifference on the part of those in comfort have far greater effect upon their condition than their own shortcomings. For generations it has been the well-to-do who have framed the laws and determined the conditions under which the poor must live, and each class, as it has gained the ascendancy, has shaped these laws in its own favour. The call of Christ is to us, to put these hungry, naked, homeless, diseased, and degenerate ones into a position in which they may have life in fulness. That calls for character on our part; for love (or active goodwill), for the

exercise of mind and heart in finding the way ; for determination to do the right when we see it ; for willingness to forego any privileges which we may be holding to the hurt of others ; for the putting the rule of God above what may seem to be our private interests.

In this way character is indeed everything. It is the object of our endeavour ; it is the test of every reform ; it is the means by which reform must be achieved.

CHAPTER III

CHILD LIFE

HUMAN society, in spite of its apparent stability, is continually changing in its composition. Roughly speaking, at the present time, about one-sixtieth of the population of the United Kingdom dies off each year. This fact has not for the nation the sorrow which the individual death brings to the friends of the lost one. For it is the only condition on which a tide of new life can flow. Collectively, death is the remover of all the failures and those whose powers are exhausted; the giver of fresh chances, let us hope to those who have passed on, but certainly to the nation itself. It makes way for the incoming of lives that are fresh and plastic, that can face the old problems with new vision, and take up the old tasks with unstaled energy. But their very plasticity presents one of the most important problems. Of the new lives pouring in, at a much greater rate than those who are passing out, will the proportion of failures be greater or less? Will they come to be better or worse fathers and mothers, workers and thinkers, administrators and seers, teachers and prophets, comrades and lovers?

One thing is certain. What they will be depends to a very great extent upon the treatment they receive in the early years, while in body, mind, and character they are still susceptible of formative impressions, not yet built up in any of these into the more or less fixed framework of adult life. There is much discussion to-day concerning the relative power of heredity and environment, in determining what any life will be. It is sufficient to say here that however interesting the study of heredity may be, its problems are scarcely yet above the horizon for the practical social worker; its principles are not yet agreed upon by those who know most about it, and what has become reasonably certain from the experience of breeders of animals is extremely difficult of application to human life. But the environment is a matter of our own disposition, and it is clear that its influence is enormous. We must therefore concentrate on this, and perhaps the determination of what can be done by its means will also determine the residuum due to heredity.

One other fact is of immense importance at the outset. Of these new lives that come among us every year, destined to be the nation of the next generation, the great majority are born to the working classes, and of these the very poor are the most prolific. With these the birth-rate is much higher even than the abnormally high death-rate. At the other end of society the reverse is the case. The conditions into which the children of the poor are born are of the gravest significance for the nation of thirty years hence.

Infantile Mortality.—A great number of the children that come into the world go out of it before their first

year is completed. It would of course be expecting too much to look for the survival of all these frail and helpless ones. But the figures show very clearly that an enormous number perish needlessly, for it is not a mortality roughly constant over the whole population. It is lowest among the well-to-do, and increases with the intensity of the conditions of poverty. Whereas among the upper classes there is one death among ten or twelve born, among the better working-classes there is one in five, and among the very poor it is about one in four.¹

The causes of this are very complex. Some of them apply before birth, and others after. Overcrowding generally follows poverty, and statistics show that the infantile death rate follows the intensity of overcrowding very closely. In the country this overcrowding is every whit as bad as in the towns, as far as the houses are concerned; but in the towns there is also overcrowding of the houses upon the whole area. Insanitation also goes generally with overcrowding. Another very fruitful cause is the factory labour of the expectant mother, when of a kind injurious to health, and the return to such work, with consequent absence from home, while the child is still in infancy. This leads to another evil condition, the feeding of the child artificially, instead of by its mother's milk. The substitutes are too frequently not only scanty, causing underfeeding, but of the wrong kind, causing malnutrition. The milk supply of towns is a very serious problem at the present time. In its conditions of gathering, transit,

¹ Mrs. Alden, "Child Life and Labour," pp. 19, 20.

and retailing, it is subject to dirt, disease germs, and hurtful variations of temperature, besides the serious adulteration and doctoring to which it is frequently subjected. Of the condensed milk which is often substituted, many brands are altogether valueless as infants' food. The ignorance of mothers both as regards food and general treatment is often appalling. Intemperance numbers many victims, by neglect, overlaying, and even cruelty; and of course there is a certain proportion of parents, as in every class, who are callously indifferent. But in families with larger incomes, such put the care of their children upon others. The infant in a poor home has no such second chance.

The Growing Child.—Very much the same story has to be told of the children who survive infancy. The mortality of children under five years of age follows the same lines, and yields figures in very much the same ratios. We are able, however, to add to the mortality returns some instructive facts concerning general condition.

In many towns the height, weight, and general health of children from different groups of schools, arranged according to the poverty of the parents, have been noted and tabulated. Invariably it is found that the degree of inferiority follows the degree of poverty. The establishment of school clinics will give us more detailed information on this, but already we have enough to prevent any hope that our present knowledge will be modified in a favourable direction. Much, however, may be looked for from the activity of these clinics in discovering and dealing with

ailments before they have gone too far, though of course the real remedies lie much deeper than doctoring, and must be applied to the root causes.

The "Survival of the Fittest."—It is sometimes urged that this mortality is really a good thing, weeding out the sickly ones, and allowing only the fittest to survive. Nothing is more dangerous than the application of biological phrases, imperfectly understood, to human affairs. This particular phrase, on the lips of a biologist, is used to denote a cause of differentiation, and has no implication of superiority in any other respect than survival under the given conditions. There are many conditions which favour the survival of the lower types rather than the higher ; in this case it is the lower that is the "fittest to survive." So far as there is a lesson to be learnt from biology it is this: that brutal conditions will favour the survival of the brutal, and that those lowest in the scale will often maintain their position merely because they are the more prolific.

But it is clear that the conditions which kill off so many thousands of the nation's children maim the survivors in tens of thousands. When these conditions are improved, there is corresponding improvement in the children affected. This is shown, not only by the differences recorded above, between groups of children from different ranks of society—which might be used as an argument for class superiority—but by the response made by the same children to better feeding, healthier surroundings, and greater skill in management. Very many of us, including the present writer, were born so feeble that undoubtedly

our survival is due to the care bestowed upon us rather than to inherent strength. It would be difficult to persuade us that our survival was a misfortune for the nation, and at least we have the satisfaction of seeing healthy children growing up in our homes, to follow us.

The Child as Worker.—One of the cruellest conditions of childhood is that which robs it of its years of play, and overloads its slender powers with the toil that properly belongs to adult age. Much has been done to remedy the extent of this evil, and we must be thankful that the worst conditions are in the past. But there is still more than is generally recognised. Child labour falls into three classes :—

1. *Half-time Work.*—This has been abolished over great areas, but is still found in the textile and some other industries. The greatest obstacle in the way of its abolition lies in the opposition of the parents themselves, who do not want to lose from the family exchequer the wage that the child labour brings. Probably it would be only fair to recognise a feeling that the occupation is as educative for the life-work as much that they learn in school. But it is a serious stumbling-block to those plans for dealing with the problem of youth generally, which are steadily maturing, and there is great hope that soon it will be altogether abolished. The value of this reform will depend entirely on what is put in place of the occupation.

2. *Employment Certificates.*—Children between the ages of thirteen and fourteen who have attained a certain standard and can get medical certificates of

fitness, may leave school altogether and rank as "young persons." At present there is no compulsion upon them to continue their education, although they are at the age when they are only beginning to understand what education is. This, however, comes up for discussion in a later chapter.

3. *Extra Labour of School Children.*—This is the cruellest wrong of all. For the ordinary school hours put quite sufficient responsible strain on growing children, but in many cases they are compelled to work in shops or in the streets for as many hours as would make a full working day by themselves. The strain on the body and the brain is enormous, and it is doubtful if they can ever recover from its effects. The kinds of work these children do, such as going on milk or newspaper rounds, running errands in connection with shops, house-work and minding babies (for girls), are in themselves of an exhausting nature, and it cannot be expected that those who engage in it can derive benefit from the school education.

Efforts at Reform.—Many Acts of Parliament have been passed with a view to improve the lot of the poor child. The half-time system was itself an improvement on the whole time at the factory or brick-field, and the Employment of Children Act of 1904 is aimed at restricting the evils of the employment of school children. As regards infantile mortality, the Notification of Births Act, which may be used to bring skilled advice to mothers immediately on the birth of a child, has led to good results where it has been adopted, and "schools for mothers" and kindred institutions have in many places succeeded in rousing

a genuine interest and pride in exercising the proper treatment of infants. The "Children's Charter" of 1908 is aimed at the protection of infant life and the defence of children against cruelty and degradation. Then there are school clinics and the feeding of school children, not universal, but increasing throughout the country.

These and other efforts, which would take too much space to mention, show that the national conscience is really roused and active on behalf of the little ones; but it would be a great mistake to suppose that the existence of an Act of Parliament means that its provisions are being satisfactorily carried out. Constant vigilance and unremitting service on the part of many volunteer workers are indispensable for this.

There is also a serious division of thought among those who must be credited with being equally in earnest in their concern for child life. There are those who concentrate on the children themselves, and reckon as wholly good any immediate improvement brought about in their physique, education, or morals. There are others who are fearful lest the active concern of the State in the children should tend to impair both the rights and the responsibilities of parents. The feeding of school children may be taken to illustrate this.

On the one hand it is urged that the children cannot be left with insufficient nourishment without spoiling them as future citizens; that to leave them until the parents could or would give them these meals at home would be to leave them for ever, and that well nourished and educated children are much more

likely, to develop into responsible parents than those left in semi-starvation to experience the neglect of their own parents, enforced or otherwise, as a normal condition.

On the other it is pointed out that the real unit of social life is the home, and that the feeding in the schools makes it easier for the mothers to be absent all day, thus encouraging a grave cause of evil ; that the real solution is to make it possible for the wage-earner to maintain a true home, and everything which takes the children off their parents' hands encourages those forms of industry in which the home can be disregarded, and the rate of remuneration calculated without regard to the necessity of feeding the children there. Also, that one cannot draw a reasonable line between feeding and everything else that is needful to the child ; and the prospect is opened up of children being deprived of their own mother's care, and the more irresponsible parents being completely relieved of the consequences of bringing children into the world.

Partisan feeling is apt to overlook the force of opposing arguments, but there is no doubt that the real line of reform must combine what is true in both positions. One consideration is of especial importance. It is that whatever we do with the children now will not reveal its true significance for twenty or thirty years, when the little ones of to-day are the parents of the next generation. There is therefore all the greater need of serious thought and the suppression of every tendency to make the children the subjects either of rash experiment or of party exigencies.

The Christian Point of View.—For those who are concerned with the teaching of Christ, one thing stands out clearly. "It is not the will of your Father in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish."¹ The evils which diminish and warp their life must at all costs be removed. This removal, that is the will of God, is clearly seen to be also the greatest good for the nation, and should be its central and controlling policy. It may be, in face of the grievously wrong conditions in which many thousands of the little ones are to-day, that some measures of an exceptional and temporary kind will have to be taken to extricate them from the evil, and give them a surer footing of good. But such exceptional measures ought to carry with them provision for their own cessation as the desired result is attained.

Anything that threatens to destroy the home is abhorrent to the Christian faith, but it must be remembered that in those cases which present the problem *the home is already destroyed*. The material tenement does not allow of home life in any real meaning of the word ; the income is insufficient for making a home in other ways, and neither the rights nor the responsibilities of the parents are in actual being. The Christian problem is not to defend homes that exist so much as *to create homes* where there are only caricatures masquerading under that name.

It must be remembered also that there is a Christian view of the responsibility of the community as well as of the responsibility of the parent. These are not at all necessarily conflicting, but should be mutually helpful.

¹ Matt. xviii. 14.

The community steps in necessarily to protect the child against parental cruelty and neglect. Ought it not equally to step in to see that parental functions have material and scope for exercise ?

As a matter of fact, it is cheering to note that many of the actions recently taken by the State give evidence of actually awakening the sense of parental responsibility, and making the fathers and mothers partners with the community in doing the best for the children. Certainly the problem seems to be, not to rear the boys and girls into the healthiest individuals merely, but to make them the best possible parents for the future, and to organize conditions so that they shall be able to exercise that parenthood to the best effect.

CHAPTER IV

HOUSING

THE more deeply we feel the necessity of home-life to the nation, the more imperative becomes the question of the supply of good houses, for a house is the essential material condition of a home. But it does not follow that anything called a house will make a home possible. Certain positive qualities are needful, without which the enforced occupation of a house or tenement may become more destructive of health and morality than wandering at large and sleeping in the open. There must be sufficient air space, especially in the bedrooms, to obviate poisonous atmosphere ; the drains and sanitary appliances must be good, or they become actual sources of danger ; the construction and general arrangements must help, not hinder the domestic functions of the home, the family meals, the family cleanliness, the family recreation and the disposition of the family sleeping, with due regard to age and sex. Finally, the cost must not be so disproportionate to the family income as to encroach upon other essential needs. The various ways in which these elementary conditions of home-life are violated constitute the Housing Question.

Overcrowding.—There are two aspects of overcrowding. One concerns the number of people in any given house ; the other has regard to the number of people living within a given area. The first kind is found both in town and country, and is caused by the fact that there are not enough tenements within the means of the working-classes, counting good, indifferent and bad alike, to house them without packing more of them together than is consistent with health. The evil is greatly aggravated in many districts by the fact that the people concerned must live just there, and vacant tenements in another part are of no use at all to them. The second kind is found chiefly in towns, and is more attributable to the pressure of the people themselves than to the scarcity of the houses, for these have already been planted much too thickly, and for the health's sake should be greatly reduced in number. Even in the country, it is becoming much too common to see the new houses packed tightly into rows and groups, instead of being spread out with garden space round them. The mining villages of the Welsh valleys are pitiful examples of this, and also of the small amount of living space allowed to each cottage, although there is an enormous amount of unused land up the valley sides.

In large towns one may find working-class districts with as many as three or four hundred inhabitants to the acre, while in the comfortable suburbs there will be only a score or less. This density is caused by both forms of overcrowding operating together. Of course, a certain degree of proximity is necessary both for effective working and for the proper satisfaction of the

social instincts. But clearly it must not be carried beyond a certain point. In the Census that point is estimated at two persons to the room as regards houses, and twelve houses to the acre is often mentioned as the limit which should be allowed for residences. But many other considerations must be taken into account; size is a factor as well as number, both in respect of rooms and houses, and the condition of the adjacent areas will also make a difference. One thing certain is that even on the very low standard adopted in census enumeration, the percentage of overcrowding in the houses not only of the very poor, but of the workers generally, is a national disgrace and peril.

Insanitation.—The mere packing of human bodies too closely together, in view of the fact that every one is a slow combustion stove giving off emanations poisonous to life unless quickly dissipated, is wofully insanitary. But there are other factors. Many thousands of the houses are of faulty construction as regards foundations, drains, damp-courses and quality of material. Even those which have been erected since the promulgation of modern bye-laws have not always been built in actual accordance with them. Building inspectors have been overworked and underpaid, sometimes therefore induced to turn a blind eye till work was covered up; Health committees have sometimes been lax and reluctant to “put too great a burden upon property,” and public opinion has been slack and ill-informed.

But an enormous number of dwellings owe their origin to the era of the rapid creation of manufacturing towns, when there was no public opinion at

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all on the matter. In many northern towns there are large numbers of "back-to-back" houses, which are also side-to-side, and therefore have openings in front only. It is impossible for any adequate current of fresh air to circulate in these, or for the proper amount of light to penetrate. In many other blocks there will often be found one water closet to serve several houses, and water taps in the same proportion.

The evil condition of the houses is frequently aggravated by the insanitary habits of the occupants. Under the conditions suggested by the foregoing facts, cleanliness and decency can only be maintained by persistent and strenuous effort, and too often the public opinion into which the dwellers in these houses have been born has not required either. Those who have had aspirations have too often found the discouragements beyond their power to resist. It is small wonder that when they have been placed in more favourable tenements, they have been slow to change the habits of generations, and have in some degree justified the caustic remarks of owners and agents about "pigs in palaces." The uplift needs to be applied to houses and occupiers together, and time must be allowed for change. Even the middle classes have only comparatively recently appreciated the blessings of the open window and the morning bath, and the appreciation is not universal even now.

Inadaptability.—The suitability of the house or tenement for home-life is a matter which requires much greater recognition than it has yet received. It is of high importance that food should be stored in a cool and airy place, but in vast numbers of "homes"

there is no place of storage at all. Not only the food, but the fuel and the cooking utensils must be kept in any odd corner, on the drawers, if there are any, or under the bed. In those numerous quarters whence the wealthier classes have migrated, their large houses are let out in tenements, with very little adaptation, if any. Hence the only fire available for cooking is not in a range, but in a bedroom grate; there is no scullery for washing up, no copper for laundry purposes, and no backyard even for drying the clothes. The five or six million people who live in tenements of less than four rooms very frequently have to use one or more of these for all purposes. The same room has to be bedroom, kitchen, larder, scullery, meal-room, nursery and often workroom. It is the wash-house, when washing is done, and also drying ground. Little wonder that the social sitting room is so often sought in another establishment.

The worst feature of this inadaptability is seen in the enforced sleeping arrangements. The problem of arranging suitably for sex and age is altogether insoluble, and as a result what are regarded among the middle class as the simple decencies of life have perforce to be ignored.

Cost.—Yet the price paid for these overcrowded, insanitary, inadaptable dwellings is relatively very high. Not only is the cost per cubic foot of space actually greater to the poor than to the middle class, together with the absence of all the conveniences reckoned as indispensable by the good housewife, but the relative proportion of income absorbed is very much greater.

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Evil Consequences.—Some of the hurtful results have already been traced in the infantile death rate and the diseases of childhood. They will meet us again in the chapter on Health, with a wider application.

Here it is convenient to emphasize the relation of these physical conditions to the charges so commonly brought against the poor of drunkenness, gambling, immorality and thriftlessness. In the case of a large proportion even of our overcrowded people, these charges must simply be repudiated as not true. The life of the poor is compulsorily very public, and the vices that certainly exist force themselves on the attention, while the orderly, sober and decent folk are, from the nature of the case, easily overlooked. The main point for consideration here, however, is that the housing conditions of the poor are exactly those which would be chosen if we were deliberately trying to foster the character complained of. It is impossible to have social evenings in a room crowded by bed and table, with children either asleep or more probably still awake, in the same apartment, some home work occupying the women, or perhaps the washing hung from corner to corner, and the family effects, for lack of storage accommodation, standing wherever space can be found. Necessarily social life is sought outside, and for most, the only attractive place is the public house. The stuffy air of these dwelling places, and the universal murkiness of the surroundings, produce the general nerve-craving for brightness and excitement that are provided both by drink and gambling more readily than by any other means within reach.

As regards morality, one has only to imagine faintly the night condition of these small close rooms, the enforced proximity of members of both sexes and all ages, not only of the immediate family but often of relatives or lodgers (!), to wonder not so much at the evil results as at the great number who maintain their sturdy character through it all.

"If your misses had slept, squire, where they did,
Your misses might do the same."¹

This reminds us that this is not only a special town evil, but extends to the country cottage with equal force.

As regards thriftlessness, a caution must be entered against rash judgment. One often sees "economical dishes," recommended by ladies who have a fire constantly going and every appliance at hand. The poor woman has to count the cost of fuel as well as of the food; she has often only an open bedroom grate which does not allow of operations which carry themselves out on a closed range; her own work only allows of a few minutes attention to the preparation of the meal; and she cannot store, even if she could afford, more than a frying pan or so. Often the seeming wastefulness is really the best that can be done under the circumstances, and perhaps is better done than it would be by her critics. But it is also easy to see that these conditions are indeed the most conducive to a carelessness of despair. Those who triumph over the conditions are heroines, but society cannot yet be based on an expectation of heroism in all.

¹ C. Kingsley, "Alton Locke."

Remedies.—Public Health and Housing Acts, with many societies both for propaganda and active experiment, witness to the rousing of the public mind and conscience in respect of housing. But progress is very slow, and in some respects even non-existent. The clearing of many slums has resulted in the bringing of hitherto respectable districts into conditions of slumdom. The closing of insanitary houses has increased the house famine and intensified local overcrowding, or even forced families into the workhouse. In face of this many local authorities have been slow to take any action, especially as some experiments under the Housing Acts have proved costly for the community, and profitable to the owner of insanitary property. But the chief stumbling block has been the ignorance of the public and even of members of governing bodies as to the powers already in their hands, and the experience of those who have boldly made attempts. Much can be learnt from Continental methods of Town Planning and from experiments in our own land, as for example the proceedings of the Birmingham Housing Committee under Mr. Nettlefold, the Garden City movement, and the Co-partnership Housing Council, with its associated societies.

The commanding fact is the lack of sufficient suitable houses. For this the land system is blamed by many, and it certainly needs reform in many ways. In towns the cost of land can run up to fabulous figures, and the powers of the ground landlord may profitably be readjusted. But it is the pressure of the population that causes the price to rise, and it does not seem that

it is at all necessary for the work and general life of vast multitudes of the people to be carried on under these congested conditions. It could in very many cases be transacted with greater profit in all respects outside the crowded towns, and by relief of the pressure the fictitious value due to mere position would automatically fall.

The trouble in the country is due, not to price of ground, but to the dislike of many landlords to allow building at all, and also to the difficulty of building decent houses at a cost which can be met out of the wages of the inhabitants. The first might be overcome by some measure of land reform, but the second is beyond its scope. The building industry must return an average profit for the subsistence of those who engage in it, or it will not be carried on. But the rent of a suitable cottage which yields this average profit seems to be at present beyond the means of the labourer. Meanwhile many of the cottages already on the ground are let at uneconomic rents, to which wages are adjusted and with which new building cannot possibly compete. We seem therefore in a vicious circle ; without a sufficient supply of houses, rents cannot come down in congested parts, and the workers cannot afford a rent which will ensure the building of sufficient houses. The logical conclusion seems to be that the solution lies in the general wage question, with the possible alternative that it might be good for the community to make the housing supply a common question like the maintenance of roads.

The one thing clear is that the matter demands the careful and earnest attention of every citizen, and

prompt and effective action when public opinion is formed.

The Christian Point of View.—The ravages which present conditions make on character, and their disastrous effects on home-life, make it impossible for the informed Christian conscience to remain apathetic. The words, "I was a stranger and ye took Me in" have reference to homeless ones, and the study of housing conditions shows that the overcrowded multitudes are truly without *Homes*. It is the spirit, not the letter, that matters. Remembering this we need not attempt the hopelessly literal fulfilment of His words by receiving them into our homes—though in emergencies that has been done—but may realise His purpose even better by working steadily for the possibility of a real home for everyone. That this bare possibility should in present conditions seem so remote is surely the most scathing criticism of our vaunted civilisation.

Particular methods must naturally be subject to differences of opinion on economic grounds, and must stand the practical test of experiment; we cannot venture to insist on any one of them being regarded as the necessarily Christian way. But the *object* must be continually upheld, and insistence must be made on supremacy of human life over vested interests and of justice over business expediency. We have to say to citizens and statesmen, "This thing has to be accomplished; it is your business to find out how to do it without real wrong to anyone. But done it must be."

CHAPTER V

HEALTH

SOME things are desirable for what they are themselves, others as the means for the procuring of some further end. Health possesses both characteristics. It is one of the principal objects for which we obtain material goods and to which these minister, when rightly used. The actual practice of men may deviate widely from this, but no one disputes its truth and sanity, and many a man who has sacrificed health in the pursuit of wealth would gladly reverse the exchange, if it were possible. But health is also the condition of productiveness, whether by power of muscle or of brain. For the great mass of wage-earners, whose income depends on their continuous labour, health is the chief bulwark against destitution. All social investigators agree in attributing a very large part of poverty to sickness.

We may look at the matter from two distinct, though related, points of view. There is the bodily frame itself, its size, weight, strength, and other inherent qualities. This can be conveniently summed up in the one word "physique." There is also the history of its working; what happens to it, either to

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aid its harmonious running or to throw it out of gear. This we call its state of "health," though not quite accurately. Health is really the normal condition in which all the functions are severally working as they ought, and collectively in harmony. The condition in which something has gone wrong, and which is unhappily in some degree the most usual, is disease. But in common parlance we speak of good or bad health, so that with this explanation we may be allowed to follow colloquial usage, and speak of "physique" and "health."

We have learnt that both these are subject, like all else, to the action of cause and effect, and have made sufficient progress in tracing the actual working of these to bring them in large measure under the possibility of our control, and therefore within the range of our responsibility. But the causes are to a very great extent beyond the power of individuals to control, being rooted in social conditions. Where the individual is able to control them, it very frequently happens that he or she must be brought under social control, to prevent widespread damage to others. For these reasons the matter of health becomes part of the social problem. Because also it is dependent on the supply of food, clothing, houses, and other conditions, and in turn affects the production of these, we find that health is not only a part of the social problem, but is interwoven with every other part. This chapter is therefore reserved for those aspects which are conveniently treated by themselves.

Physique.—To some extent, though the degree is

at present ill-defined, the bodily frame is determined by heredity. It is not yet easy to see how to use this in the production of a healthier race. The students of what is called the science of Eugenics may throw some light on the problem in the days to come. Certainly it is true that the degenerate are generally the most prolific, and possibly the legislation now being attempted with a view to the segregation or supervision of the feeble-minded may have some good result.

But it is clear that, outside the action of heredity, there is a wide range of possibility for each new-born child, fulfilment or failure in which depends upon nurture and conditions of life. We may not be able to overpass the limits set both by the nature of the race itself and of that particular strain to which we belong, but since we can, and do, fail to reach these limits in many varying degrees, we can at least work for the removal of the causes which hinder the realising of our actual best. To produce a nation which more nearly fulfils its present possibility of human life may be more in furtherance of God's Kingdom than the production of some new super-man.

Strictly speaking, the conditions which determine realisation or failure begin, not at birth, but before. The child may be infected by certain diseases; it may be injured by accident or cruelty to the mother; it may be affected by what the doctors call prematurity or immaturity; it may be the victim of evil conditions in the mother's environment, such as lead-poisoning, or of the mother's evil habit, such as alcoholism.

According to the evidence given before the Inter-departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, the great majority of children are born healthy. At least 80 or 85 per cent. start fair, and Dr. Eichholz was convinced that the percentage was as high as 90.¹ The others would be accounted for by the prenatal causes mentioned above.

But when we come to the results of investigation into the condition of children at school, we find that in many places this percentage is reversed. At Johanna Street School, Lambeth, 92 per cent. were considered to be below normal physical condition. This is an extreme case, but in Manchester the percentage was 66, and in West Ham, 70. In height, weight, and general condition, the children of the very poor are inferior to those of the better paid artisan, and these again to those attending middle-class schools.

In adult life, it is believed on very good grounds that there has been an improvement of the physique of the middle and upper classes over that of former ages, but the working classes of our industrial towns are notoriously undersized, with a greater sickness and mortality rate than that of the comfortable classes generally. Before the Inter-departmental Committee, General Sir Frederick Maurice said of recruits to the army, "The total rejections of those willing to enlist are, so far as I can estimate, not less than three in five."²

The chief causes of this have already been mentioned in the chapter on child life. As soon as the child is born, it requires for its proper growth such conditions

¹ Report, vol. i. p. 46.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. q. 299.

as good food in sufficient quantity, warm clothing, cleanliness, fresh air, suitable exercise and sufficient sleep. Owing to bad housing, poverty, ignorance and evil habit, very few of the children of the poor get all these things, and though happily the recuperative powers of children are very great, failure in any of them may leave its mark all through life, and continued failure leaves an indelible impression.

Feeble-mindedness must be reckoned as coming under this heading of physique, for the brain is the physical organ of mind, and is undoubtedly affected by the same causes as the rest of the body. Much of this is no doubt due to alcoholism in the parents, and should be prevented before the children are born. But the remarkable results obtained by Dr. Montessori in the teaching of feeble-minded Italian children give hope that adequate feeding, housing, and general nurture of these unfortunates might do much to lift them out of this condition, when they have unfortunately already been brought into the world.

Health.—The diseases which befall mankind are very numerous, and require a medical expert for proper enumeration. But for purposes of the social reformer they may be roughly grouped according to their external occasions.

Probably the chief place must be given to tuberculosis. This disease, in its many forms according to the part of the body attacked, is entirely a product of civilisation. It might almost be called a "housing" disease, as it flourishes most in dirty, damp, overcrowded and stuffy houses, but milk is also responsible for carrying the germs, and drinking habits, under-

feeding and other diseases cause the patients to be predisposed to its ravages. It occasions about a quarter of the illness among members of Friendly Societies, and kills about 50,000 persons yearly. A very large proportion of cripples owe their condition to it. "Yet it is one of the most preventible of diseases."¹

Closely allied are the other "germ" diseases, some of which owe their origin to insanitary conditions, and all of which are much more freely disseminated than would otherwise be the case by the close packing of our poor into overcrowded houses and areas, and by the general conditions of poverty which render the body a favourable field for their "culture." With regard to all these diseases it must be remembered that the kind of reception given to the attacking germ is more decisive than the attack itself.

Another group may be termed "food diseases;" poisons taken into the body by food which contains the products of decay or is adulterated with some harmful substance. The necessity of the poor to buy cheaply and the corresponding stress upon the shopkeepers to supply them cheaply, together with a widespread ignorance of food-values, are factors in this evil which cannot be ignored.

Then there are "occupational" diseases, such as poisoning by lead, chrome or mercury; or diseases of the respiratory organs, caused by dust from grinding, fluff and other substances thrown off into the air. Naturally the working classes are the principal, almost the sole sufferers from these.

¹ G. Newman, M.D., "Health of the State," p. 92.

Lastly, there are the numerous accidents. The first year's returns under the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1906 showed 3,447 deaths and 323,224 cases of disablement.

It is not pretended that this classification is in any way complete; its purpose is to lay stress on the causes rather than on the diseases themselves, that the preventible nature of a great proportion of them may be evident.

Cost.—It is not possible to give accurate figures for the entire cost of illness but some illustrative facts may be stated. Taking tuberculosis alone, Messrs. Latham and Garland tell us that over one million pounds are spent by friendly societies in sick benefit for this one disease, and that in England and Wales an annual sum of £475,000 is spent on indoor relief of tuberculosis. The cost to charitable institutions they estimate at about £448,000.¹

But to the worker there is the more terrible cost of forfeited wages. The same authorities compute that the annual loss in wage-earning power in England and Wales is nearly £2,000,000. From this it can easily be understood why the worker is so often reluctant to take the treatment in the early stages, when cure would be probable, and goes on until he can do no more—too late for healing.

To figure dimly what the real cost of sickness is to the nation, we must get away from money terms, and try to imagine the loss of labour power in the patients themselves, and also in the vast armies of doctors, nurses, officials and other persons who are taken from

¹ "The Conquest of Consumption."

productive occupations to attend to the sick. Then we must add all those who are engaged in the erection of buildings and the manufacture of all the appliances and means of treatment. Lastly, the cost of the materials themselves must be reckoned, together with the indirect labour of those who, in various ways, are drawn in such as carriage and transit. It is clear that the nation might spend a huge sum on preventive measures, if effective, and be very greatly in pocket by the transaction.

Remedies.—The analysis of causes shows that the prevention of disease and of bad physique involves social reform of every kind. Healthy homes in well-planned towns, good and sufficient food, warm clothing, and healthful recreation, together with absence of unnecessary anxiety as to the morrow are the positive conditions of physical efficiency. But to get these there are innumerable evils to be swept away, and very much to be done as regards the personal factor.

Meanwhile mention must be made of the growing National Service of Preventive Medicine. Our Medical Officers of Health with their attendant Sanitary Inspectors are doing more and more each year, and will do more as fast as a growing public appreciation will let them. We have a number of Acts of Parliament concerning sanitation, building, and town-planning, control of occupational diseases, inspection of school children, and school clinics, &c., which are both dealing with diseases already incurred and finding out the true ways of prevention.

As regards the burden of sickness upon the worker, we have the Compensation Act for accidents, and now

the Insurance Act for all forms of invalidity. No doubt the machinery of these is susceptible of continual improvement as experience shows the weak places. Probably the incidence of the burden requires readjustment here and there, and malingering must be carefully guarded against. But on the whole these are great measures, helping us on to the time when the burden will be made very much smaller by the minimising of accident and disease themselves, which is the true goal.

It must not be forgotten that education of the people themselves is one of the most important factors of the problem. Reference has already been made to the effect of alcoholism. This dread scourge is found at work in every department of the social problem. Besides the direct diseases it induces and the susceptibility to other diseases, it is responsible for an enormous amount of ignorance, prejudice, and apathy on the part of the sufferers themselves, which stands like a huge mountain in the way of every reform; to say nothing of the vested interest it has created on the side of those involved in its manufacture and supply, so that many thousands of otherwise good-hearted and well-meaning men and women approach these questions with almost hopelessly prepossessed minds.

The Christian Point of View.—In the teaching of Christ the attitude to disease seems very simple. It is one of unwavering hostility. It is an enemy of the Kingdom of God, and those in its grip are described as those "whom Satan hath bound."¹ The healing of the sick was inseparably associated with the preaching

¹ Luke xiii. 16.

of the Gospel, and the only things which seem to have hindered the Master Himself in His work of bodily restoration were the unreadiness of the patients themselves on the one hand, and the danger of its encroaching on His time for the yet more important work of spiritual restoration on the other. The earliest disciples were charged to maintain this association, and the reaction of our life towards the sick is made an integral part of the test in the Final Court of Judgment.

That the healing of the sick was effected by direct personal action, and that we are shut up to acting by material means, does not appear to make any difference to the principle. The root-motive remains the same, and the obligation is unaltered. There are still the persons who are suffering, and also the persons who can, if they will, relieve the suffering by remedial action.

The question of character also is so involved with the condition of the body that it cannot be disregarded by the Church of Christ. Sin and disease are inextricably interwoven, and it is not by any means always the sin of the sufferer himself. Often it is the sin of those who are greedy of gain, callous or indifferent to the results of their actions upon others. In either case it is equally the concern of Christians in the formation both of the personal and the national conscience, and in the permeation of citizenship with the Christlike spirit.

CHAPTER VI

EDUCATION

UNFORTUNATELY for many years the word "education" has irresistibly suggested to the mind the other word "controversy," which has so often immediately followed it; and the air has become so thick with disputes that it is not easy to approach the subject in a book of this kind. Many of these disputes, however, can be ignored as having no direct connection with education itself. Many others can be left to the specialist; they will be understood all the better by those who desire to proceed to their study if the simple central problem be grasped first.

This problem owes its existence to the fact that boys and girls become men and women, and that, while this is due primarily to life forces which work independently of us, the kind of men and women they become is very largely determined by that conscious and deliberate action which we exercise upon them. This is what we mean by education. It is easy to take a narrow view of this. Custom sanctions the identification of education with a certain kind of book-knowledge, familiarity with particular sets of ideas and proficiency in the use of language. This is due to

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the historical fact that, as far as modern civilisation is concerned, the earliest conscious system of education aimed at fitting boys for some office in connection with the Church, and subsequent systems have been more or less modelled upon it. Without impugning the value of this kind of training we must take a broader view.

The Aim of Education.—All children to-day are supposed by law to come within our educational system, and the answer to the question, "What are we trying to make of them?" must therefore have reference to them as men and women simply and not to particular classes. It is true that some specialisation may be advisable for different occupations in adult life, but the central aim is so to develop their powers as to qualify them in the highest possible degree for the functions common to all. By far the most numerous and important relations of life are those which belong not merely to particular occupations, but to men and women as such. Whether as muscle-workers or brain-workers, as artisans, tradesmen, professionals, or officials, they will all be citizens, their ways of looking at things will form public opinion, public culture, public policy. Beneath all differences there is a substratum of common thought, common judgment, common feeling. The boys and girls of to-day will be the fathers and mothers of to-morrow; not all of them, in fact, but the great majority, and we have no means of knowing which.

It is only after this central purpose has been provided for that the question of specialisation arises; then it becomes of great importance. In addition to

this common intelligence and character the nation has need of a wonderful diversity of occupations which require particular kinds of training very different from each other. Fortunately, Nature meets this need with an equally wonderful diversity of aptitudes in the young people. The difficulty is to direct these various natural abilities into the appropriate callings—a part of the problem in which we have failed badly as regards children of the workers.

The Factors of Education.—It is a common mistake to regard the school as the chief or even as the only factor in education, and to blame it for all the failures, real or supposed, as the boys and girls reach adult life. It is certainly the most immediately important, from the national point of view at present, because it is the only organised means of working on the children in education. But there are two important stages in which the school has no part at all. First, the exceedingly impressionable years of infancy, before the school period, and second, the intensely critical stage of youth, after the children have left. The vast majority of children go from school before the age of fourteen.

Besides this, the hours spent in school are only about twenty a week while they are in full attendance ; all the rest of the time quite a different environment is moulding them. This environment must be taken into account.

Environment.—The surroundings of infancy, which have been seen to have so marked an effect on physical development, cannot fail to fashion the mind and character also. The people with whom the

infant first comes into relation will mould its fundamental conceptions of men and women, and these will be the more powerful in that they have not been intentionally impressed nor consciously received.

Besides persons, the general environment of things will have a most important influence. There is for example, a general difference between town and country children, in spite of all individual diversity. In the country the progression of natural events is on broad and practically certain lines, the movement of things in general is slower, the people are for the most part all known. In the town the surroundings are man-made, arbitrary, quickly changing, and full of sudden emergencies. Consequently the type of intelligence developed is different in the country and in the town. If the conditions are good of their kind, each has its advantages; but where they are bad, of course the disadvantages predominate.

The conditions are bad in the case of the majority of town children, and from the educational point of view the results are disastrous. This cannot be fully analysed here, but one very important aspect can be taken.

Play.—We have been slow to recognise how necessary to normal growth play is, but it is based on a fundamental need not only of the human race but of all animals. The free spontaneous movement is in itself essential to proper adaptation for later life. "The practice of movement by young animals not only fits them for the life, but it keeps up the virility of the race. Animals do not play because they are young. They are young in order that they may

play.”¹ Virility is a quality of mind and character as well as of the body. Dr. Séguin, practising in America in the latter part of last century, produced most beneficial effects on apparently defective-minded children by movement alone.

But in spontaneous play children rehearse what they have seen and heard among the older folk. Observation and memory store up the material for this play, and the play itself fastens it firmly into the mind. The nature of the material gathered from crowded tenements and “model” dwellings, from the squalid streets and sunless courts, and from the public-houses at almost every corner can be better imagined than described. Even in the case of those who come from decent homes—and we should be thankful that these are so many—there is the unavoidable passage through the streets, which are often also the only playground outside school hours; and though the foul experiences seem often to fall harmless before the sublime innocence of childhood, they are stored subconsciously, and bear their fruit in due season. In too many cases the innocence vanishes all too soon. “Shades of the prison-house begin to close about the growing boy.”

A wise national system of education will take these things into account. It will lend its force to the reform of these conditions, and while waiting, will provide more parks and playgrounds, open as long as the children need them, and will also provide play-teachers as well as those for study. The streets give neither the proper space nor material for play.

¹ “The Animal World,” by F. W. Gamble, p. 47.

The School.—The elementary schools of the country are, as has been said, the definitely organised means of education. Their critics are many, from all sides, but the criticism is not always with knowledge. They have at least made an enormous difference to the child population and to the general level of intelligence and information of the workers. The failures have been due not so much to what the schools have done as to what they have been hindered from doing. In 1911 the National Budget made provision of over £70,000,000 for its fighting forces, but only £18,000,000 odd for education. The total amount spent on elementary education, including rates as well as taxes, was £23,323,300. As there were over six million children on the rolls, this works out at less than £4 a child.

The consequence of this is that schools are so understaffed that teachers have to deal with children in huge classes, and in very many cases for the sake of cheapness very poorly qualified teachers are appointed. One thing that is perfectly clear to students of child-life is that all children cannot be taught alike, in battalions. Even normal children require much more individual attention than can be given in classes of sixty, seventy and more, and those who are not normal need to be classified for special methods. Besides those who are obviously feeble-minded a very large number who are usually considered backward or troublesome are really abnormal in some particular respect, which can only be discovered by appropriate tests. Most of us are abnormal in some particular.

If this initial difficulty could be removed, so that children could be taught in smaller groups by more generously trained teachers, there would probably be little difficulty about reforms in the curriculum. There has been a great movement already, influenced by different educational experiments, and these more flexible schools would respond still more readily to the influence of assured results. But there is a danger in rash experiment in the schools themselves; the results will only show after a generation. What is needed is a fuller recognition of the fact that we are making men and women, and not merely scholars. With that as the central principle, accepted by the nation, other things will take their proper place.

Character Training.—The general discipline of a school, the cleanliness required, and the influence of the teachers themselves count for much in the formation of character. But it is a grave question whether this is enough. The nation needs that its children should be not only drilled into habits, but trained in the appreciation of sobriety, sincerity, good faith, perseverance, decency, purity, fellowship and goodwill, and other qualities which make men and women good citizens—healthy in character as well as in body. Whatever the settlement may be of the controversy concerning “religious education,” this character formation needs developing. Unfortunately it is this “religious controversy” that has obscured the issues.

The Years of Youth.—The chief fault to be found with our school system is that it ends too soon. With the exception of those scholastically gifted pupils who

go on to "higher education" by means of scholarships,' and in most cases thereby leave the ranks of the working-classes altogether, the vast majority of the boys and girls leave school at fourteen at the latest.

Even on the mental side this is disastrous, for up to this age children have only a vague idea of what education means, and unless special influences are at work they speedily lose much of what they have been given, using the power of reading only for amusement and excitement. It is neither their fault nor that of the teachers, but a natural consequence. The attempts to get them into continuation classes have had only meagre results, which again is not surprising, as most of them go to work. It is easy for both boys and girls to get work on leaving school; the difficulty is to keep it as they grow up and need the wages of men and women. They are not therefore inclined to shut themselves up in a schoolroom after a day's work.

These occupations which they enter are only too often what are known as "blind-alley" occupations. That is, they pay a good wage, higher than can be got where trades have to be learnt, but teach nothing and lead on to nothing. As the boys and girls grow to manhood and womanhood, they are displaced by the fresh generations leaving school, and are stranded. This is how we manufacture casuals and loafers.

Another serious aspect of the matter is that this age is exactly the one in which guidance and discipline are needed. Fresh powers of life, both physical and mental, are coming into play, in many cases with

rapidity and much disturbance of general outlook. It is at this point that as future fathers and mothers the appropriate teaching and training should be given. The mistakes made at this period are often irretrievable, while those of earlier years are comparatively unimportant.

It is just at this time, in actual and sorry fact, that the boys and girls are plunged into a fresh set of circumstances, and given a harmful independence by the possession of a weekly wage, which they can always threaten to take to others if the home restraint is too severe for their liking. The talk of their older companions is often of a kind to initiate them into the seamy side of things ; the stirrings in their own inner nature they do not understand, and it is little wonder that so many are hardly recognisable, after a year or two, as the bright youngsters who left school.

Some kind of oversight and guidance, some way of directing into the right industry must be found. The school age might well be lengthened to sixteen, and the industrial training, both for town and country life, cared for in ordered fashion, and with a view to the development and future of the boys and girls themselves, not the mere exigencies of the market. The indirect results upon the demand for adult labour would compensate for the loss of children's wages from the family budget. In any case, that budget ought to be put upon a basis which is independent of "boy's work."

The Christian Point of View.—Education has always been peculiarly the care of the Church. It has not always exercised that care with the broadest outlook,

but for ages it was the only agency for educating at all. Now that the nation has assumed the task, there has indeed been some actual obstruction on the part of ecclesiastics, due to an unwillingness to let its authority be superseded. But there is still a great function remaining. Whatever be the settlement of the question of religious instruction inside the schools, it will still be the part of the church to educate its own children in the highest character, and to bring its children to the Source whence the power of character flows. The influence of Christians in favour of the transformation of evil environment, and their intelligent interest in the real working of the school system can count for much. May the time be not far distant when the different denominations will give their members to the service of the children on School Committees, as Managers, as helpers in the Care and After-care Committees and in other ways, even more abundantly than at present, and with a view, not to gaining any advantage over each other, but to pour into the work for the children all the force and spirit of the Christian life.

CHAPTER VII

INDUSTRIAL CONDITIONS

THE hours of labour, including the meal-times which fall within them, take up the best portion of the waking day, both as regards time and power. The conditions under which the work is done are therefore of enormous importance, since they determine the external nature of the worker's whole life, to an extent which is scarcely calculable. The duration, the strain, the monotony, the nature—agreeable or otherwise—of the toil itself, the atmosphere and the surroundings, the relations with overseers and with fellow-workers—all these are prime factors in determining whether we can speak of the dignity of labour or of the degradation of serfdom. Other considerations to be taken into account are the risk involved to life or health, the regularity of the work, and the confidence or anxiety concerning its continuance. Some of these will receive fuller notice in other chapters.

Factory Acts.—A long series of statutes, enacted since the evil time when practically no regulation existed, has done much to lift those employed in factories and workshops out of the shocking conditions which then prevailed. These regulations have

been primarily concerned with women, "young persons" and children, but they have practically benefited the men also. Air space, ventilation and cleanliness affect all alike within the same walls, and the regulation of the hours of labour of some must have effect upon those of others, both from practical arrangement and moral influence. Trade Unions also have been able, by concerted action and collective bargaining, to use these improved conditions for women and children as some kind of precedent for the men.

But too much is often made of the fact of improvement. It is possible to be better and still be very bad. The comparison must be with a standard of fitness rather than with bygone conditions. As with food and other material goods, it is not a question of more or less, merely, but of adequacy. There is a positive measure of fitness with regard to life; nothing less is satisfactory, and anything more may pass over into another kind of hurtfulness. Hours of labour can be lengthened to exhaustion or shortened to laziness; discipline may be tyrannical or relaxed to disorder and incompetence; buildings may menace health or be foolishly luxurious.

We are still very far from having learnt and applied this due measure, and in consequence have not known the full response of life in power and productiveness. Acts of Parliament are not always carried out, and there are gaps and faults in the statutes themselves. Whole classes of workers have only in these last days been brought, very tentatively, within their scope. There is also a very large area of life in which com-

pulsion is powerless, and the only effective force is goodwill and right feeling in the men and women concerned.

Hours of Labour.—The effect of the duration of toil is twofold: that upon the production and that upon the workers. It is not at first clear that there is any harmony between these two. The longer the toil the more it seems will be produced, and the greater will be the exhaustion of the toilers. It does not seem to matter to the employer as such, concerned as he is with the amount of output, what happens to the employées, who can always be replaced when outworn. These on their side are interested in their own lives and what they can get for themselves; the employer's profits, so far from being any advantage to them, seem to be actually the occasion of their hurt, as being wrung out of their muscle and sweat, and enabling him to withstand their demands the more securely. Of course there must be some profit, or their employment would cease, but the evidence of the general prosperity of the employing class is so great as to make this appear to be a remote possibility. That these views are really held very widely on both sides is plain from the condition of practical warfare with which we are so largely afflicted to-day, and from the compulsion which each side seeks to exercise upon the other, and which the nation is being driven more and more to exercise upon both.

But happily, beneath the apparently irreconcilable divergence of interest, there is a deeper harmony, which the better minds, aided by the better dispositions, are discerning with growing clearness. More

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and more employers are seeing that many other factors besides that of time enter into the question of productiveness, and that their kindly desires towards their employées, so far from being a menace to their profits, may actually reinforce them.

For experience has shown that, in many industries at least, shorter hours have both increased the output and reduced the expenses. There seems to be a natural period during which the average worker can produce the best results; beyond this he tires so greatly as to reduce the average of the previous hours and to lose freshness for the coming day. This is mostly true of those whose output depends chiefly on their own exertion or skill; it is less obvious with those who have to tend machinery that runs itself, or do jobs that seem to require only such attention as can be given by anyone not actually asleep. But even in these there are mistakes which prove costly, and in innumerable though not obvious ways, overwork defeats its own intention.

Without compulsion, therefore, some of the best employers have reduced hours, and in the increased alacrity and goodwill of the workers, together with the savings made in respect of running costs, wasted material, accidents, and so forth, they have reaped their harvest.

With regard to the life of the workers, reasonable hours mean much more than is seen at first glance. It is not merely the pleasure of having some appreciable part of the day for leisure with powers of enjoyment unexhausted, though this is much in itself. It means a longer working life, with the

consequently greater possibility of bringing up the children satisfactorily, and perhaps making some provision for old age. "Too old at forty" has been the fate of far too many in the past, and large numbers who have not really been so, have had to suffer from the assumption of the employing foreman that they must be.

But in the immediate present, increased leisure means much more than enjoyment. The charge has frequently been brought that shortening of hours simply means increased drinking, and individual cases can be brought to support this. But time must always be allowed for readjustment of habits already acquired to changed conditions. Bank holidays have quite lost their former evil reputation for drunken orgies, and there is a great mass of testimony from those who have instituted the shorter working-day that increased leisure is actually a powerful influence towards greater sobriety. Men return to work after the week-end much more steadily, and in some notable instances the change has been the occasion for the spontaneous growth of recreative and educational societies which have greatly diminished the custom of the public-house.¹ Unhappily, this cannot be reasonably looked for as a general thing, but opportunities for using leisure profitably need to be made, since the conditions have become directly prohibitive. Our towns in too many cases seem to be specially designed to drive men into the public-house.

¹ See P. Snowden, "Socialism and the Drink Question," Appendix.

The case for a better adjustment of labour and leisure is very strong; the family life of the nation, the present character of the workers and their continued effectiveness all require this reform, and the experience which shows that it is not hostile to true economy is very valuable.

Living-in.—There are a number of occupations in which living in premises owned or controlled by the employer is a condition of employment. Certain trades, such as the drapery, require large numbers of the assistants to accept board and lodging, under regulations, as part of their remuneration. In others, circumstances compel the workers to rent cottages from the employer, because no others are to be had. The extreme instance of living-in is of course to be found in domestic service.

Much controversy rages round these conditions, especially in the commercial trades. On the one hand it is argued that it is really a good thing for the assistants to have a home found for them; that it is possible to provide them with better conditions than they could afford for themselves, and that some amount of discipline is necessary where a large proportion are at least comparatively young. No doubt it is possible for good employers to do a good deal in this way. But the case against it is very strong. It is claimed that only a comparatively small number of employers do actually make this better provision, and that even in these cases compulsion to accept it ought not to be made a part of the terms of engagement.

In very many more instances it costs the employer

less than paying wages which would enable the employées to live in decent independence, and many of the men are precluded from marrying and setting up homes of their own. Moreover, bedrooms have to be shared with companions not of their own choice, and often the enforced association is not only uncongenial but repellent. The regulations are also frequently oppressive, and drive the assistants to spend every possible hour outside instead of in what ought to be "home."

In the case of country labourers and others who have to live in their employer's cottages, it is obvious that, with their home depending on their keeping that particular job, they are put in an unfair relation to the employer.

The Truck Act long ago forbade the payment or part payment of wages in kind, with exceptions that include these cases. It is probable that in time the principle will be extended to these occupations also, and that even in domestic service wide-sweeping changes may be made, though the nature of this makes it very difficult. It seems that a necessary preliminary to change will be the alteration of other conditions. In the case of labourers' cottages, there will have to be ampler provision, possibly under local authorities. The problem of domestic service may be largely solved by the organisation of a supply of skilled domestic help during certain hours of the day. The matter needs patient and sympathetic discussion from all sides, with broader views of the whole situation than are generally taken by those who dispute from particular and narrow angles.

Treatment.—Besides the conditions which can be stated in exact terms, and concerning which agreements or regulations can be made, there is the extremely important question of treatment. The relations between persons have even more effect upon the happiness and well-being of those concerned than material circumstances. The most carefully drawn compact prescribing what shall or shall not be done will have totally different effects according as it is carried out grudgingly or with goodwill. If the personal relations between employer and employed are good, there will be little need for enforcement, with the important exception that the worst employers, in a competitive system, keep the standard low. But if the personal relations are bad, the best regulations will fail.

As a matter of fact, ample evidence can be obtained by those who have the confidence of the workers, that many of the most serious industrial conflicts in recent times have been at bottom revolts against the personal treatment received. The occasion of strife has had to be stated in terms of wages or hours or something calculable and definite, but the seething passions of resentment have been caused by the sense of injustice in administration, of indignities inflicted, and of affronts to manhood and womanhood. These make all the difference between service and servitude. On the other hand, employers resent having to yield to demands under threats, and these antagonistic personal forces inflame any originating cause of strife, which otherwise might be settled in a few moments with goodwill.

The trouble seems to lie chiefly, though not solely,

among subordinate officials. In these days of large industries, the chief directors have little to do with the workers directly, being necessarily occupied with such matters as finance, organisation and the possibilities of the world-market. It is not possible for them to come into personal contact with the multitude of the employées, without neglecting their primary functions. Hence the direct personal treatment of the workers depends upon the foremen and other subordinate officials, who have it in their power to make working hours a period of honourable industry or of time-serving on the part of some, and grudging, resentful toil on the part of others. It is only fair to them to say that they are frequently in a most difficult position in this respect themselves.

The selection of suitable subordinates and the inspiration of these with the spirit of fairness and consideration ought to be regarded as one of their most important functions by those at the head of great organisations, not to be neglected in the stress of other business. Where direct personal relations between employers and employed still survive, as in smaller firms and in domestic service, there is a stronger inducement to the employer to be humane, if only for his or her own comfort, though this is balanced in many cases by the love of exercising authority. Whether for good or evil, the effects are intensified in the occupations which involve living in. Great trouble is occasioned by the inevitable shiftings of employment, whereby those who have suffered in one place come to the next with a suspicious temper and a readiness to manufacture grievances.

Clearly, these considerations apply in both directions, to employées as well as to employers. But as things are, the balance of power is so heavily weighted on the employing side that the responsibility is correspondingly greater.

The Christian Point of View.—It is a matter of deep concern to many that in social and industrial relations the Christian spirit appears to have so little scope. The qualities which make a good business man, according to the prevailing judgment, may include such virtues as honesty, so far as it is believed to be the best policy, but the keenness which is always on the alert for the making or interpretation of a bargain which is profitable to one's self does not seem to harmonise with any more consideration for other's welfare than is set forth in the bond. Many employers also, who would gladly see their workers in improved conditions, feel unable to afford the expense which may be incurred while their business rivals compete with them in prices, by cutting down all such expenditure to the lowest possible limits. So there is a tendency to keep business and Christianity in two separate worlds, and even to resent the mingling as a profanation of sacred things.

But the things of the spirit are of such a nature that nothing less than the whole of life will give scope for their true exercise, and the earnest seeker after the Kingdom of God knows that "it ruleth over all."¹ Either the Christian religion must be put aside as a beautiful dream, but a dream only, or it must be brought to bear on these necessary conditions of life. The

¹ Psalm ciii. 19.

former course has been taken by many, who now find in the zeal of social reform their only religion. This however does not really heal the schism in life, for the eternal claim persists. Happily multitudes are now beginning to apply the test of the Kingdom to all things that necessarily concern us, with the firm conviction that the earth really is the Lord's, and can therefore be used in full accordance with His will. Much more than has often been believed can be done even as things are ; and if alterations have to be made, it must be in our industrial system, not in the essential spirit of Christianity.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WAGES QUESTION

THE foregoing discussions must have suggested already that the wages question is, if not quite at the centre of the problem, at least very near it. The poor do not get the food, clothing, house accommodation and other things needful for full effective life, because their income is inadequate, and this income is obtained by their labour, payment for which we call wages. Given an adequate rate of wages and freedom from compulsory unemployment, the problem would in great degree cease to be of an economic character, and would become personal in nature. It is true that the use made of income has an important reflex influence on the making and distribution of wealth ; that is, there is an economics of consumption as well as of production and distribution. But it is clear that if everybody could earn enough to secure, with ordinary prudence and restraint, what was required to satisfy the real needs of life, the problem would be shifted from the organisation of industry to the education and influence of personal character. It might still be social but not primarily economic.

The Present Facts.—Unfortunately, the hard fact faces

us that under present conditions the existing wage income of a large proportion of our people is altogether inadequate to the rearing of families in efficiency, even with the wisdom of Solomon and the self-control of an archangel. Such wisdom and self-control, if possessed by anyone in receipt of an insufficient wage, would be applied in the first instance to increasing its amount. Those who, though falling short of Solomon and the archangel, yet possess these qualities in more than ordinary degree, actually solve the problem for themselves in this way, by climbing out into occupations that are better paid. But this solution, however satisfactory to themselves, is not capable of general application. The occupations they have left must still be carried on by someone. Fields must be tilled, ships must be loaded and unloaded, goods must be conveyed by portage, cartage and carriage of all kinds, roads must be swept and kept in order, clothes must be made and innumerable other callings must be fulfilled, or our industrial organisation will break down utterly. It is just in these fundamentally necessary occupations that wages are, in most grades of labour, so inadequate. The problem is not how to get better pay by leaving them, but how to raise the wages within them. This the most gifted individual cannot do by his own industry and skill.

Professor Bowley's figures have already been quoted. Two and a half million adult male wage earners in steady employment are paid at rates not exceeding 25s. weekly. This does not mean fifty-two times this rate as annual income, as is the case with salaried people.

There are always a certain number of days for which no money is received, owing to holidays (unpaid), sickness, accident, change of job, &c. This has been variously estimated by authorities at from four to ten weeks per annum. Also, only a few earn at the rate of 25s. About a million work at the rate of 20s. or under, and very many are between the 20s. and 25s. limits.

The money figure by itself means nothing ; it must be interpreted by the cost of necessities. Mr. Rowntree¹ calculated that for a man and wife and four children in an ordinary town 26s. a week was required for bare physical efficiency, on the supposition that there was no sickness, no accident, no break of work, no birth, no death, and that everything was purchased and used with full wisdom and strictest economy. He allowed nothing for even the least costly recreations or adornments, nor for renewals of furniture and utensils, or any other "capital expense," nor for provision for age. Since he made this calculation prices of many necessities have risen considerably. Allowing for this, and also that such knowledge and wisdom are not the ordinary endowments of either rich or poor, to say nothing of the considerations that many of the expenses he left out are practically forced upon the spenders, and that physical efficiency cannot be attained without something being spent on other kinds of efficiency and on recreation, it becomes abundantly plain that all these two and a half million adult male wage-earners in regular employment are grievously underpaid, if they

¹ "Poverty : A Study of Town Life."

are to fulfil the normal functions of fathers of families. If they do not, the State suffers as well as themselves.

When to these are added the vast army of casual workers, with their meagre wages made more unmanageable by the irregularity of receipt, at one end of the scale, and at the other those who are getting rather better pay than the upper limit, but still less than is really adequate, owing to the considerations mentioned above, the vastness and importance of this wages question begins to be understood.

But there is yet the question of women's wages. It is notorious that these are inferior to those of men for corresponding kinds of work. Giffen's "Wages Census of 1886" showed that while 57 per cent. of men included in the enumeration failed to earn more than 25s. weekly, the corresponding proportion of women was 99 per cent. ! Such statistics as are available at the present time, *e.g.*, in the census of employment, seem to show that while there has been improvement in some classes of women's labour, the general relation has not altered. It is true that the upkeep of a family depends preponderatingly upon the wages of men, but there are actually many thousands of cases in which the women are forced to become the family stay. This is peculiarly the case with widows, who are in the specially unfortunate position of being responsible both for earning the wage and keeping the home. Apart from this, a large number of women are paid less than is required to keep only themselves in good condition.

Results of Low Wages.—It is sometimes urged that in spite of these figures great multitudes can be found

who were successfully reared upon wages below these limits. This impression breaks down upon investigation. We have become so accustomed to the existing conditions that we accept as satisfactory what is really far from being so. The rates of sickness, mortality, and general expectation of life show clearly the terrible effect upon physique, and the rates of pauperism, especially in old age, demonstrate the weakness of the economic position. In fact, all the evils resulting from malnutrition, overcrowding, and other conditions of poverty, which have already been considered in previous chapters, flow primarily from low wages. Some of these may fitly receive further discussion in fresh aspects.

It is the low wage of the family bread-winner which forces into the labour market both the wife, who ought to be at home, and the child, who should still be at school, or, at any rate, still under training and discipline. Mothers of children have quite enough to do in their own homes, work which is of far greater importance to their families and to the nation than any which they can do in factories or workshops, or as "outworkers." This last can be done just as well by others, of whom there is an abundant and eager supply, but no one can fitly fill the mother's place. It is the same with boy and girl labour. It can all be done by older folk, but nothing can restore the years taken from childhood and youth, nor compensate the nation for the loss involved in so many directions. While the insufficiency of the man's wage remains, it is useless to blame the parents. The remedies must be sought in social action.

One point that needs to be considered with especial care at the present time is that as the nation becomes increasingly aware of the extent of these evils, numbers of superficial remedies are devised. Children who cannot be fed at home are fed at school ; crèches are set up to relieve the working mothers of the care of their babies ; funds are raised to supply holidays, boots, and all manner of things which the children are discovered to need.

From one point of view this is excellent, even necessary, for we cannot hope to rear a coming generation of healthy parents by leaving the children in a semi-starved and neglected condition. But it should be clearly recognised that all help of this kind, whether from the State or from charity, is really a supplement to wages and a subsidy to those who pay them. These things need strong justification, even for temporary application, and then they should be applied so as to lead to the real solution. Otherwise we drift into supposing that we have cured the evil itself, instead of merely gaining breathing space while we go deeper for the permanently better way.

There are, no doubt, many things which can be permanently done by the State, on the ground that the interests of the State are paramount, and that in these cases collective action is more fitting and effective than individual. There is nothing inherently wrong in collective action. But it should be justified as such. If the State can educate and feed children better in all respects than parents can, it should definitely take all alike under its care ; but to discriminate as regards those who are well or badly

paid is to invite the evil effects of a disguised pauperism and a subsidised industry. It can hardly be considered a favour to the poor, for it is apt to keep wages depressed, and to make home life, where the mother looks after her children herself, a permanent impossibility. It is very probable that the State can manage the education far better than individuals can, while the real solution of the feeding problem is to put the parents in a position to do it well, and to see that they fulfil the duty thus made possible.

It is certainly disastrous to subsidise those industries in which wages are low in this indirect fashion. It really means that those particular employers are getting profits out of the pockets of the rate- or tax-payers, and the industries are neither genuinely competitive for profits, nor frankly national for direct service. Such a method combines the weak points of both systems.

From all these considerations it is evident that the State, that is, the organised nation, has a deep interest in the payment to all workers of a real "living wage." It is interested financially, because of the enormous cost it has to bear in the public expenditure entailed by the evils flowing from poverty and pauperism. It is interested morally, because collective action of some kind is required to establish better conditions, which involves collective responsibility. It is also interested in the simplest and most direct way, in that the whole business of the State is the well-being of its members.

The Other Side.—So far the question has been considered with reference to the wage receivers. There is another side—that of the wage payers, without adequate appreciation of which only blundering con-

clusions are reached. For wages are not paid out of some Fortunatus' purse, but out of values created by labour, *and received by the employer.*

The existing system of industry is based on profits. Manufacturers and traders have to live themselves by the difference between the cost of an undertaking and its receipts, or they cannot carry it on. In the total finished product there is value due to many factors, of which what is generally called labour is only one. Others are the material used; the tools and machinery, with cost of running; the premises in which the concern has lodgment; the office and selling organisation; the capital invested, and the superintendence and management. No business can continue unless all these factors together really do produce value equal at least to the payments made for them, though one may be overpaid at the expense of another.

It is generally granted that labour as a whole does create more than the value it receives in wages; it is the business of the manager to reject all that does not leave some margin. But it does not follow that the employer himself receives the full value in the selling price of his goods, and if he does not, he cannot pay it out to his workers. The selling price is not fixed according to any standard of value; it is just what the article will fetch. The buyers may be willing to pay a greater price than they do rather than go without, but they will not pay more than they can get it for in the same market. In order to get more business into their own hands many sellers cut prices, expecting to remunerate themselves by a greater total turnover, and

others are compelled to follow suit. Now, in meeting this competition, it is easier to reduce wages than to lessen the remuneration for the other factors, even though in the long run it may not be good for the business.

For since there are more applicants for work than there are places to be filled (not naturally, but under the existing system), the workers themselves compete with each other. Their labour is not sold with reference to the value created by it; they take what they can get. Employers, like buyers, will naturally not pay more than they have to pay for the same quality of labour in the same market.

This is the stress that keeps wages low, and it is evident that all employers cannot be blamed for it. Some bad employers may set the pace, and others have to follow. But a very great deal of the stress comes necessarily from the existing system itself, in which there is no practicable standard of what a man's work is worth except what it will fetch under competition, in which the balance of forces dips heavily against the wage earner.

There are, however, some factors which tend to alleviate the stress. In many cases a high rate of wages is compatible with a low total cost of labour, because well-paid workmen turn out so much more that the labour cost of each article is much less. Also, they are more economical in the use of material and in those indirect costs which arise from carelessness and disaffection. A certain number of employers are developing this factor with excellent results, but it is far from being general in application.

Suggested Remedies.—The attempts to provide remedies for low wages are too numerous and require too much explanation to be treated here with any fulness. They must be studied separately.

Trade Unionism is briefly the substitution of collective for individual bargaining on the part of labour. As regards wages, it is an attempt to fix a standard below which the wage for a given class of work shall not fall throughout an entire industry. If it is successful it helps the good employers against the sweaters. Apart from cases of unwise leadership, it need not be hostile to the real interests of employers. Experience has shown that the well-established unions have been able to co-operate with the masters to the benefit of both. Where insoluble conflicts arise, the two ways of settlement seem to be either a strike or a lockout, which means a mere trial of strength, without reference to the merits of the case, or a binding decision by some outside authority. The latter is desirable, but needs the most careful constitution. For the fact that the authority is outside means that there is a very wide scope for misunderstanding the situation through lack of knowledge.

Conciliation Boards of different kinds have been tried, with varying success. In different parts of the Empire these have powers under Acts of Parliament, and are being watched with much attention. In this country the Board of Trade has power to set up Wages Boards in some notoriously sweated industries.

Many are advocating a universal Minimum Wage, fixed by Act of Parliament, with reference to a mini-

mum standard of living. This will need a great deal of thrashing out before the nation is ready for its adoption.

The Socialists desire the complete national organisation of industry, so that the nation, as such, would own the sources and means of production, and produce directly for the needs of its members, not by a system of profit-making.

Land reformers of different kinds believe that an alteration of the basis on which land is owned would set right most of the evils and enable the present system of production for profit to work satisfactorily.

Others, again, believe that a system of co-operation between the workers themselves might supplant the present hiring of workers by employers. All these need to be studied in greater fulness for their proper understanding.

The Christian Point of View.—Besides the general care for the poor, which is so strongly enjoined upon us by the prophets and by Christ Himself, there are many strong sayings in the Scriptures concerning the wages of labourers. The withholding of these is vigorously denounced, and it is clear that it is regarded as a matter, not of pity, but of justice.^{*} No doubt the Church could do very much in maintaining, more vigorously than it has done, a keen and strong sense of this duty in those of its members who are employers, and conversely in fostering among those who are employed a readiness to understand the other side and to be keen on the faithfulness which gives good work for good wages.

^{*} Lev. xix. 13 ; Mal. iii. 5 ; James v. 4.

But it seems especially our duty, as a Christian community, to recognise the responsibilities of the community itself, and to study the possibilities of collective action in establishing righteousness. In this connection we ought to lay aside the prejudices and misconceptions of ignorance—such as, for example, surround the subject of Socialism—and find out first what the advocates of any reform really mean by it, and then whether it is or is not compatible with the Kingdom of God, either as already advocated or as it may be purged and shaped by fair and honest discussion. In Christian circles, above all others, there should be an eagerness to give fair play, and to be taught as well as to teach.

CHAPTER IX

UNEMPLOYMENT

BESIDES an adequate rate of pay, a fair constancy of employment is necessary. There are few occupations in which the reward of labour is sufficient to allow of frequent spells of leisure without want, and what there are scarcely come within the range of the present discussion. It is evident that workers who receive a wage which only just covers current needs must suffer when the wage stops. If saving is made for the wageless time, it is necessarily at the cost of lowering the standard of living beneath the efficiency line, and such saving as is made in this way can only last for a short period when it is brought into use.

What actually happens in the great majority of cases is that effort is made to maintain the strength of the breadwinner at the expense of the rest of the family—the children and the home-women. In this way the effectiveness of the growing generation is impaired, and the nation pays the bill in after years. In long spells of unemployment the furniture and clothes of the household gradually disappear, and in too many instances the downward steps in social

grading are never retraced. This experience comes to thousands of skilled workers, while whole classes of the unskilled live in a chronic alternation of bare sufficiency and want—if they ever have appreciable periods of sufficiency. The same condition is generally reproduced in the case of their children ; it is the curse of casual labour. Of course casual employment, in the sense of taking jobs as they come instead of entering upon a regular engagement, *may* give a man more work than he can get through, but as a rule it means this intermittence of work and pay, and casual workers for the most part are those who have to be content with a low rate of pay for an insufficient amount of employment. They are thus hit hard both ways.

Besides this chronic intermittence of employment there is the unemployment which overtakes regular workers when they are for some cause thrown out of their job and are looking for another. This may be for a short time only, and therefore negligible in importance, or it may, from various causes, be so protracted that the strain of maintaining the household is very severe, often making it impossible to get occupation of the same grade again.

Yet another kind is under-employment, or short time, with correspondingly short pay. It is often agreed between employers and their workers that all shall submit to this rather than that a certain number shall be thrown out altogether. It is the smaller evil of the two, but it is just as truly unemployment when taking the form of intermittent hours or days as when concentrated into weeks. It spreads the burden

but does not lessen the amount. Its great advantage is that it keeps all the workers in some degree of fitness, abler to cope with full employment when it returns.

Immediate Causes of Unemployment.—The *primâ facie* classification of the causes of unemployment is fairly simple. They fall into two groups—causes in the workers themselves, and causes of lack of work for them to do, though they are quite able to do it.

1. *The Unemployable.*—These are commonly spoken of as forming one class, with a decided inflexion of blame in the name given. But there are different causes of unfitness. There are those who have lost their powers by advancing age, or through infirmity or accident. There are those who never had adequate powers, such as the feeble-minded, the epileptic, and those suffering from congenital disability. In another group are those devoid of skill; in yet another those who, though perhaps able enough, are not worth hiring because of irregular morals, such as drunkenness, unpunctuality, quarrelsomeness, or some other fault which causes more loss than gain by their employment.

The final word is not spoken when these are pronounced “unemployable.” Questions arise as to the possibility of making them fit, or if this is not possible, of dealing with them in the best way and taking steps to prevent the manufacture of others like them. These will be considered in the next chapter.

2. *Absence of Demand for Labour.*—This may be roughly grouped under four heads.

(a) *Permanent Insufficiency of Demand.*—Many industries which have required considerable speciali-

sation die out through change of fashion or the substitution of a different method for attaining the same end. The specialised workers are too many then for the diminishing trade, and fall out of employment until they can either use their skill elsewhere—too often not practicable—or find refuge in unspecialised labour. In our complex and ever-changing industry these are more numerous than is commonly suspected. But the great and overshadowing example of this source of unemployment is that unskilled labour—as it is called—which is the refuge of all the rest. There is never sufficient demand to absorb all this.

(b) *Irregularity of Demand*.—Some trades are subject to great pressure at irregular times, with intervals of slackness. Dockers, for instance, cannot be employed when there are no ships to unload; but when many are in port at the same time the men work in long spells to get them unloaded quickly. Other examples will readily occur.

(c) *Seasonal Demand*.—Certain trades follow the seasons, owing to the natural conditions which these bring with them or the habits which they have induced. Fruit-picking can only take place when there is fruit to pick; outside painting is kept for the fine weather; inside painting largely follows suit; winter also brings its special needs, which cease or diminish greatly when the warm days return.

(d) *Cyclical Demand*.—Trade in general expands and contracts, not only in single countries, but throughout the world. An examination of statistics shows this very clearly as a fact, though the causes are still much discussed. Among the British Trade Unions

making returns, unemployment appears to vary from 2 per cent. of the members in good times to about 10 per cent. in the worst. In individual unions, of course, the range of variation is considerably greater—boilermaking, for instance. These figures cannot be taken exactly for all workers, outside as well as within these unions that give unemployed pay, but they are sufficiently representative to illustrate what cyclical unemployment means.

It would have been possible to describe these causes as over-supply of labour instead of insufficiency of demand, and in some minds it always takes this shape. But to talk of surplus labour in connection with poverty, which is obviously a pressing need of those things for the making of which labour is indispensable, appears to be an absurdity, and an unnecessary confusion of the true issues. This will become clearer as the discussion proceeds.

Present Need for a Margin of Labour.—The existence of irregular, seasonal, and cyclical demand for labour shows not only that there must be unemployment in times of low demand, but that industry as at present organised could not be carried on unless there were a reserve to draw upon when the demand increases. For, from the nature of the case, the demand must be met when it arises; only in comparatively few cases can arrangements be made to spread it over long periods. The fruit that is not picked when it is ripe is not picked at all, and if orders are not fulfilled while the want exists, those orders will be cancelled.

While, therefore, the phrase “stagnant pools of labour” is terrible in its significance for the mass of

workers, it is evident that they do not exist through the fault of employers. An elasticity of labour is an essential part of present-day industry, and it does not seem probable that it will ever cease so to be. The solution of the problem will have to include this, for though it may prove possible to steady the cyclical variation of labour as a whole, it is impossible to keep all the separate kinds of demand at a continuous level.

Suggested Remedies.—The analysis of immediate causes suggests naturally a number of remedies applied directly to remove them; very many have been advocated, and some have been attempted. On the other hand, it is held by a steadily increasing number of people that the root cause lies deeper, and that no remedies applied to surface effects can be successful. The reasons for this view will be best appreciated, however, by an examination of some of these more immediate remedies themselves.

1. To meet the apparent surplus of unskilled labour, the obvious remedy is to reduce their numbers by training as many of the rising generation in some skilled trade as possible. Undoubtedly this is a right thing to do, together with every other measure for producing healthy, intelligent, and well-trained men and women. But it does not follow, because it is good in itself, that it will solve this particular problem. If an overplus of labour is possible among the unskilled, it is also among the skilled. Every well-established trade has as many as it can absorb, and to flood their numbers is merely to transfer, not to solve the problem. As it is, the ranks of unskilled are being constantly recruited by those that have been unable to

get the work they were trained for. To make men skilled does not create a demand for their skill.

2. To meet the irregularity of demand and seasonal variation, the plan of dovetailing in different ways has been suggested. That is, that summer workers should have also a winter occupation, and that those whose work is irregular should have another trade which they can pick up when the first is slack. This would obviously be excellent for those who got the continuous work. But it is already done to some extent, and to carry it further would need more elaborate organisation than at present exists. This is being supplied in some measure by the Labour Exchanges, which probably have a great future. There are difficulties to be met on the side of the different trade organisations, and the nature of things does not lend itself too readily to the plan. But all these and other difficulties pale into insignificance before the question, Would it really reduce the extent of unemployment? If the summer workers got the winter work as well, what about those who have done it heretofore? Again we see the need of increasing the actual demand.

The most promising suggestion is that those who, like the dockers, are required at irregular intervals, should have plots of land on which they could busy themselves in growing produce for themselves. In these days they could easily be brought up by special train when required, and in this case the area of occupation would really be extended.

3. Cyclic depression is far more baffling to the suggester of apparently obvious remedies. Clearly it has nothing to do with the supply of labour. It must

ever be impossible to handle that so that it increases and diminishes with the demand. It is the latter that must be regulated, if it is in the nature of things so to do.

Unemployment Insurance has been successfully practised as an alleviation. It is a very important section of Trade Union activity, and is now becoming a national concern. In Germany it has been in operation for some years, and is just beginning in England. The plan is of immense value in saving homes and conserving the fitness of the worker. The cost is spread over a whole Union or over a wider area still, instead of falling on individuals with its full weight. But once more, it does not increase the amount of employment. The problem is not merely how to pay for the damage; it is to prevent the damage itself.

The Central Problem.—To find the solution, or at least to face in the right direction, we must distinguish the permanent factors from the passing effects. The central fact is that there are certain needs of human life, the most essential being food, clothing, and a home. These depend on the material products of human labour, upon the natural sources, which economists call by the single term "Land." This production is greatly facilitated by, and in advanced civilisation is actually dependent on the prior creation of many things which are not directly consumed for their own sake, such as machinery, buildings, means of transit, &c., including that medium of exchange we call money, which gives command of whatever is necessary to carry articles through all stages of production until they are in the hands of the consumer. All such things we call "Capital."

On the one hand, then, are the primary human needs. In millions of cases these are very far from being adequately met, and there are unlimited requirements and desires of a secondary character. There is, therefore, no need to talk of "making work." All the work men need is already crying out to be done. The hungry need to be fed, the naked to be clothed, the overcrowded to be given healthy homes, the aged, the sick, and the disabled to be cared for, children to be better educated, and many millions of toilers to be afforded a more reasonable leisure.

On the other hand are these three factors of production, Land, Labour, and Capital. The natural explanation of any going short of necessities would be that these were all being worked to the highest pitch, yet there was not enough to go round. This explanation is not true to fact. None of these are being worked to anything approaching their full possibilities. The idleness of so much labour is our problem. It is not nature but our own civilisation that is at fault.

We have an enormous demand, and one that is capable of infinite expansion, but it is not what economists call effective. Millions of shirts are needed, which would keep many more mills going, and going steadily, in Lancashire. The same is true of boots and of bread and all the great staple productions. But those who have the need have not the money with which to buy. This they should obtain by work, but when they ask for work there is none to do ! This is the vicious circle which has to be broken, and broken it must ; be for it is not only vicious, it is ridiculous.

Here, too, is the secret of the cyclic fluctuations. This natural demand is steady, but the effective demand is made variable by production for profit. For the different manufacturers are all producing in competition. They know, or they can know, what the average demand for gloves, or boots, or shirts is each year, but they do not even divide this amount between them. They all hope to sell more, so they produce more, until there is a "glut." Then they have to stay their hands. Workers are dismissed, and these, of course, limit their purchases. The shopkeepers begin to feel the pinch and order fewer goods both for their shops and for themselves. More workers are dismissed, and there is more contraction all round. Trade is so international that the effect spreads throughout civilisation. When stocks have in time become reduced, manufacture begins slowly again, and every addition of workers increases the effective demand until the expansion reaches its limits in the same way as before. Of course, there are other happenings all the time which modify this skeleton course according to their nature.

It seems from this analysis that what is needed is to make production conform to the steady permanent needs of the people. A great deal might be done to absorb the unemployed, directly or indirectly, by national departments of labour, to do those things which the nation as a whole needs but which will not pay private enterprise to undertake: the reconstruction of roads, which are inadequate to the newer forms of traffic, afforestation, reclamation of lands and protection of our shores, &c. But the great need seems

to be to find some way by which those not wanted in employment for another's profit might have access to the sources of production for meeting their own needs. It is this natural alternative which modern industrial methods have suppressed, without finding an equivalent. Such an alternative would not only annihilate unemployment, but provide a natural standard for wages; no man would work for another at less than he could produce for himself.

Whether such an alternative can be worked into the present competitive system, or whether a fundamental change is necessary is the great problem of the present time.

Probably this problem will not be solved by discussion so much as by the awakened mind and conscience of the nation impelling to practical experiments as the time seems ripe, so gathering knowledge without which present discussions are fruitless.

The Christian Point of View.—When we ask, "What is the will of God in this matter?" it seems clear that whatever may be the economic solution, it calls for whole-heartedness in the search for it. For the present condition of unemployment is manifestly not at all His will, but rather a nightmare of our own invention, perhaps the more terrible that it is so absurd. It is a deep moral question which faces Christian citizens: Ought men who are not wanted for another's profit to be debarred from producing for their own needs? That they are so debarred to-day, not by the conscious will of men but by the conditions into which we have drifted, from hunting, from tillage and from manufacture, is unquestionable.

CHAPTER X

THE NON-WORKERS

BESIDES the great body of industrial workers, and those who, though unemployed for the time being, yet belong to their ranks, there are in every nation certain classes that either cannot or do not work for their living. These include the children, the aged, the permanently disabled, the temporarily sick, paupers, criminals of certain types, those called wastrels, and the class generally described as "of independent means."

Of course this classification does not imply a corresponding rigid distinction in fact. Some people might be put in more than one class, others not always or altogether in any one, and it would be misleading to imply that all who can be called by any of these terms do no work for their own support. The purpose of the classification is to provide a convenient division of the subject.

The list appears to include people who have little in common, but there is one social truth of deep importance which does actually apply to all alike. *Those who do not produce are maintained by the labour of those who do.* Strictly speaking, this self evident truth

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applies to many who may work very hard as far as their exertions go, and who maintain their families with the payment they receive, as well as to those who do no work at all, because their labour does not in fact increase the general store of goods or render any service which indirectly helps to bring about that result. This is a matter of exceedingly great importance, which the nation will have to face one day, but at present it is too complex and intricate for solution. We have to assume for the time being that when people are willing to pay for any work being done, they are the best judges of whether it is useful or not. Assuming then that the work that is done is productive, it is obvious that those who have no share in the work are maintained by those who toil with hand or brain.

This maintenance may not be clear at first in the case of those who have money incomes of their own, for we are apt to forget that money itself does not render any service except in making the exchange of goods easy. If instead of money, people had to keep stores of actual goods themselves, it would be seen at once that these stores would have to be kept up by somebody's labour, and that if it were not their own, it must then be other people's. Without such replacing labour the stores would speedily be used up or go bad. A person may be independent of the compulsion to work, but he cannot be independent of work itself, and its results.

There is no blame or praise to be allotted to either of these conditions as such. Some ought to be freed from the necessity of toil, and some who pride themselves on being "independent" ought rather to be

ashamed of their condition. The real test is the reaction of their lives for good or evil on the community, and this is not determined by the legal possession of money or the reverse. The value of children to the nation, for example, is very seriously diminished by their being set to toil. This is not only because they ought to be educated with a view to a greater working value in the years to come, but chiefly because they are *at the present time* of incalculably greater worth to the full life of the nation as boys and girls than as workers. There are other classes also, which will react favourably on the nation's life, not through what they give to the nation but through the treatment which the nation accords to them. Commercially they would be better dead and out of the way, but spiritually they enrich the common life in proportion to the goodwill and tender care which is bestowed upon them.

The Aged.—One thing distinguishes old age from all other causes that prevent labour. It is inevitable and incurable. The latter quality is shared by certain diseases and accidents, but these might have been avoided; old age cannot be. Sooner or later the powers begin to flag, and if the worker is employed by another, he is replaced by a younger man. It is not easy then to get another job, except by taking lower wages. This, in an age of competition, is a great source of danger to the able bodied. For the sake of the aged themselves and for the sake of those who should be doing the work with their fresher abilities, the oncoming of age should be the signal for an honourable retirement. There is still much

that these aged ones can do, which is all for the common good, though not capable of measured pay. There are elements of the common life which they only can supply, qualities which they only have attained by reason of their age itself.

The problem is, how to enable this honoured leisure to be in fact. Where they have been able to lay up claims for themselves which we call independence, the problem seems to solve itself. But it has become abundantly clear that for a very large portion of our population the remuneration of labour has been insufficient to bring up a family and for meeting other insistent current claims. How then can there be sufficient savings for age, when more ought to have been spent than has been? There are many others upon whom misfortune has come, through no fault of their own, sweeping away what accumulation they have been able to effect. Many have preferred to help the present need about them, rather than to provide for themselves in a period which they might never see; which the greater number of their class do not, as a matter of fact, live to see. What is to be done with these?

Their children, it is said, must help. But their children have children of their own, and are in the same condition of not being in a position to spend enough on them. To take from the children to help those who are near the end is not a profitable policy for the nation. "The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children," says Paul.¹ Charity, again, may step in with almshouses

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 14.

and doles, but is this good? A nation that looks to irresponsible and fluctuating charity for the meeting of a continuous and inevitable need is surely on the wrong path.

It must be remembered, on the other hand, that those who have means of their own do not thereby necessarily establish their own worth, or even prove their own past industry. Means are often acquired in quite other ways. In facing this problem of Old Age, we must lay aside all idea that the possession of money divides the sheep from the goats. If it is ever to be a true test, it will be only after such changes in the possibilities of acquisition as amount to a gigantic revolution.

Somehow or other these people have to be fed, clothed, housed, &c. What we have to find is a way of doing this with the best reaction on themselves and on the nation. What seems the cheapest is often the costliest, because all the items are not gathered. There are the police and the poor law officials to be paid, if nothing is paid to the poor old man himself; there are the children who go short, the amounts thrown in "charity," and sometimes the amounts pilfered. Generally a "let-things-slide policy" is a much more wasteful method than frankly paying the whole amount out of the nation's common purse. The problem is to find a way of providing a decently comfortable maintenance for the aged, in full family life where possible, and at the least cost compatible with doing the thing that has to be done properly. There must be discipline, no doubt, for those who need it, but we must not act with harshness and

suspicion towards vast numbers of those who have done their share of toil for fear of letting down a few rascals too lightly. Old Age Pensions seem to be based on the right principle, though the application requires a great deal of extension.

Others Who Cannot Work.—The causes which prevent men and women from working, whether they will or not, may be distinguished as (a) Permanent, and (b) Temporary. In the first class the persons to be dealt with cannot be cured, so the problem is limited to the proper method of maintenance as far as they are concerned; and as regards others, the removal of causes which bring about the condition. In the second class are those who are laid aside by sickness or accident for a time, but whose condition is susceptible to remedies. Here the problem includes maintenance and prevention, but the restoration of the sick to health is perhaps the most immediately pressing.

Again we see that, as with the aged, the nation does actually bear the cost of maintenance in some way, whether it is entered in the public accounts or not. It is probable that the direct support by the State, as the organised nation, would be the most economical method, if that were the only thing to be considered. But the payment in the first instance has important reflex influence upon personal action. There is a certain danger of malingering, though as wages stop during sickness for the great majority, the inducement to be ill at the cost of the community is not great, and the cases should be detected with reasonable accuracy. But there is also

the matter of prevention. It is a great deterrent if those responsible for the conditions of the illness or accident are made to bear the cost. It is clear that these are by no means always the sufferers themselves. It is a great merit of the Insurance Act that some attempt is made to saddle the right people or communities in this respect. There is also the importance of effecting as speedy and thorough a cure as possible. For this adequate expenditure is imperative, and it is evident that to throw the whole burden upon the poor who are sick will defeat this end.

The principle of insurance meets many of the difficulties. This is not, as some assert, a respectable form of gambling. Gambling is the taking of risks with a view to getting something for nothing. Insurance is a levelling of risk over a wide area. Even if some pay more than they receive back as money, they have more than the equivalent in security. It is those who would elect to take the risks who are the gamblers. Of course there is room for much conflict of opinion about the detailed organisation of National Insurance, but this is not germane to the present discussion.

Paupers, Criminals, Wastrels.—Among these classes there are very many who might do work as far as their physical qualifications go, but who have some moral defect which stands in the way. Sometimes they throw the cost of such maintenance as they get upon the Poor Law, sometimes they gather it by criminal methods, and sometimes they manage to sponge upon others in a great variety of ingenious ways.

The problem presented by these classes is economic on the one side but also one of character on the other.

The former will be considered a little later, as at bottom it differs but little from that underlying the other forms of unproductiveness. The personal factor is of chief interest here, as the mind of the nation is undergoing a great change in this respect. The uselessness of vindictive punishment becomes clearer the more we are provided with sifted information as to its results, and the principle of "deterrence" in the Poor Law is being vigorously assailed. There is also a more general appreciation of the social causes which have led to the manufacture of these moral defectives, and the common responsibility for them. We are aiming much more at cure and prevention than at punishment.

It is much more difficult to apply methods of cure in morals than in the case of physical sickness or even mental disability, but a good deal of pioneer work has been done in the case of criminals, as for example at Elmira Reformatory in America and in our own Borstal system. The whole criminal problem needs careful sifting, and all that can be done here is to indicate the need of an instructed and diffused public opinion. As distinct from direct dealing with the manufactured criminal, the prevention of his manufacture is intimately bound up with other aspects of the entire social problem. The connection between moral, mental and physical health is very intimate, and proper nurture would undoubtedly eliminate many from the wastrel classes.

The great factor in the moral problem is that of responsibility. Whatever is done must encourage, not weaken this. At the same time it must be remembered that it is useless to expect a development

of responsibility unless suitable conditions are provided for its exercise. Only when men are put in a position to earn their living can they be required to do so.

The Cost to the Nation.—Whatever be the cause which prevents productive labour, the nation has to bear the loss in some way. Sometimes the bill is paid out of the common funds of the State ; sometimes it falls on scattered individuals. How great this total cost is has not been generally recognised, and is not calculable in exact figures. It is known that the Friendly Societies pay about £4,000,000 a year in sick pay, and that the Poor Law costs £17,000,000 or more. How much is given in charities it is not possible to say, but it is known that in 1908 the charitable institutions of London alone received £8,500,000 in contributions. If we could discover and add up all that the nation pays in cash owing to these classes of non-workers the amount would certainly be huge. But a simpler and more direct way of viewing the matter is to note that all the non-workers consume whatever goods they receive, and so diminish the general store of these things, without replenishing it. Next, all those who have to be withdrawn from productive occupations in order to deal with these also consume the goods without replacement. Then there is the huge amount of material used up in the buildings, such as work-houses, asylums, prisons, hospitals and infirmaries, with the necessary offices of administration, and the labour of all those who produce these things. Doctors, lawyers, nurses, attendants, warders, clerks,

and all the others no doubt earn what they get, but from the economic point of view they are a dead weight on the productive power of the nation, whenever they pass beyond the irreducible minimum. We cannot hope to reach a condition in which there is no sickness or crime or wastrelism, but it is evident that there is an enormous burden which is being carried unnecessarily.

It must be noted that in so far as doctors and others are engaged in preventive measures the foregoing remarks do not apply. They are then truly productive, as their efforts result in conservation of the nation's power. In fact, "Prevention" is the watchword of true reform in these directions, and whatever does actually result in the transfer of the costly non-workers to the ranks of producers will pay for its cost over and over again.

This must always be borne in mind in estimating the cost of any reform. The question is, "Will the contemplated expense be in place of what is now being spent?" If so, the balance may be very great on the right side, although it seems to swell the nation's accounts. The State may spend much more through the common purse, yet save the people who make up the State a vast amount, just as public expenditure on roads is repaid manifold to the individuals that form the public.

Those of Independent Means.—Much that has been said of other non-workers will apply to these. Allowance must be made for the fact that large numbers of those who are not paid wages or salaries, or are not in receipt of profits on account of what they do, are yet

very fruitful in results to the national life. But those who make no personal return for the goods and services they consume obviously have to be supported by others. The usual justification for this is that they, or some one who passed on the right to them, acquired capital by industry, and that a proper return for the use of this capital must be made. The chief difficulties seem to have arisen from methods of calculating that remuneration of capital, which were good enough in earlier stages of economic development, but on the larger scale of modern times have exaggerated their defects correspondingly. Many questions will have to be raised and answered concerning this which could not even be fairly stated in the present book. One very important question is whether the existence of those who are content to live upon the achievements of others is good *for themselves*. Also, it is bound up with the anomaly of the enormous rewards which fall to certain classes of activity, compared with the meagre returns to the most necessary and the most disagreeable toil.

The Christian Point of View.—There is a well-known maxim given in the New Testament—"He that will not work, neither let him eat."¹ The good sense of this is generally recognised. With regard to those who cannot work, the Christian view is equally clear and explicit. They have to be maintained and, wherever possible, liberated from the restraining bonds. The perplexities begin to arise in the case of those last considered, namely, those who abstain from work because of their own or other people's accumulation

¹ 2 Thess. iii. 10.

of legal claims on the common store. What is most needed seems to be a careful sifting of those claims, rather than a wholesale denial of them. Much that is at present sanctioned, or at least not forbidden, by law, will certainly be found incompatible with true right. Other claims may be allowed, but the scale of remuneration revised. But when law has been brought into the closest conformity with right there remains the greatest thing of all. The Christian spirit must create a general consciousness that it is most well with the life that is most active in well-doing.

CHAPTER XI

THE LAND QUESTION

ALREADY, in the previous chapters, the Land Question has been seen to lie behind the immediate problems under discussion, and it is noticeable that all serious talk about social difficulties comes round to it in the end. The reason for this is in the elementary economic truth that all material goods owe their ultimate origin to the land. We can create nothing; we can only shape the material and direct the forces which are already in existence, and without the results so obtained no one can continue to live in the body. Everyone is therefore in the last resort dependent upon the land, and, consequently, directly concerned in the way in which it is owned and used, for ownership means control of its use.

In countries which are sparsely settled this problem is not acutely felt, as men can occupy land for themselves by simply moving further on. But in all old countries all the land which can be put to profitable use has long since become the property of some one, and even the mountain and moorland which are not used for cultivation or even for pasture belong to landlords, to the exclusion of other people. Theo-

retically this ownership by a few of the source of all production might be used to exclude all others from the means of life, but of course it is more profitable to let out its use for a consideration, called rent, than to do anything so extreme. Very many others, who do not work directly on the land, find occupation in working on the materials supplied to them by those who do, and the enormous development of manufacture has led to a much larger number living in this way than by agriculture, mining, or any of the modes of directly producing food and material. This has somewhat disguised the primary importance of the Land Question, and the disguise has been intensified by other conditions.

The huge expansion of foreign trade, for example, has enabled us to draw material not merely from the land in our own country, but from every part of the globe, so that it seems as if we could, if necessary, become entirely a manufacturing country, entirely dependent for food and material upon other lands, paying for them by the finished products and living on the profit. Also, the growth of the capitalistic system, by which the mass of workers do not sell their own productions but their time, labour, and skill to employers, has turned the thoughts of most men from production itself to the earning of a wage which some one is willing to pay.

The economic truth remains unchanged, however, and is to be reckoned with in all explanations of our present conditions and in all suggested reforms. The chief trouble with the former is that manufactures and other indirect occupations do not absorb all those who are unable to get directly upon the land to produce for

themselves ; there are the many thousands of the unemployed. Then, as we have already seen, the fact that men who are not wanted by an employer are unable to take this alternative of employing themselves upon the natural source of production means that there is in consequence no natural standard of wages, but men are forced to take what they can get. So that even if we could become merely "the workshop of the world," the Land Question would still hold the key of our severest problems.

So far we have considered the land as the source of production. There is another aspect, which needs to be kept distinct, though it frequently is not. One cannot dwell or occupy oneself except upon some area of land, great or small, and if the land already belongs to some one else, rent must be paid for the use of it in this way. In towns, where it is important that dwellings, shops or factories should be in certain positions, there is considerable competition, and the price to be paid may rise to extraordinary amounts for very small patches. This is Site Value, which must not be confused with the value of land for production. Most of the huge incomes of landlords, which are often quoted, are due to this source.

The Site Value must be clearly distinguished from the value of buildings which have been placed upon the land, and from any other improvement which is the result of labour and capital employed upon it. The value which is due simply to position has evidently been created by no exertion of the owner, but by a general social movement which has made that position advantageous.

Evils Charged against Landlordism.—It is not altogether easy to disentangle the various complaints which are made against the system from those which are preferred against the persons who happen to be landlords. In this necessarily slight sketch the charges against the system may be grouped as follows :—

The first is the enormous sum which is levied as rent or royalties upon the industries which depend upon land, either as the source of material or as the necessary site. It must be noted that so long as industry is in private hands, this rent must be paid to some one, or the multitude of immediate users would themselves become landlords, to the exclusion of the rest of the nation. The gravamen of the charge lies in the fact that, being paid to private individuals, this income relieves them of the necessity of contributing their labour of hand or brain, and diverts to them a share of the actual goods produced by others equivalent to the purchasing value of the total rents. This total must be calculated without those sums which are the return of capital invested and the “wages of superintendence.” The only logical alternative recipient is the nation itself, in which case the amount would be returned to the people generally in those services for which organised government exists.

The second charge is that private ownership allows of much misuse of the land. There have been terrible instances of the depopulation of whole countrysides by the conversion of the land into pleasure and sporting preserves. Not only is the total productiveness of the land decreased by the area kept out of cultivation or

other profitable use, but the gaming rights of the owners lead to much damage to the crops on the land which is under cultivation. In urban areas, it is alleged, land is held back from building use in order to avoid payment of rates, until a sufficiently tempting price is obtained for it. This reacts with much severity upon the housing question.

Thirdly, the enormous power which the ownership of land places in the hands of the owner produces great evils. This power is really over the lives of men, and it is inevitable that, even with the best intentions, it should be wielded with the political and other prepossessions which none of us can escape. The difficulty which small men experience in getting holdings or even dwellings, owing to the refusal of so many landlords to let land for these purposes is held responsible for the continual migration from the country to the towns and to other lands, and for the very bad housing conditions of the countryside. In the case of the more prejudiced owners this power may be and often is exercised to the great detriment of those who differ from them.

The Other Side.—On the other hand, owners of rural land declare that their rents actually return only a small interest upon money actually invested in buildings and improvements, so that they do not really get anything for the land itself. In proof of this, instances are cited in which the purchase price of estates has been invested in the ordinary way and has produced a considerably greater return than the total rents before received. How far this is true of land generally can only be determined by a complete survey, but if true it

seems to bring us to a similar position to that we reached concerning wages. It does not exonerate the system, but shows that the mending to be done is with the methods and not with the individuals concerned.

One fact must certainly be taken into account in any true solution. However good a case can be built up against the justice of treating land in the same way as other private property, it is certain that it has been bought and sold for many generations, and large numbers have bought it with their earnings. These must receive just treatment in any reconstruction which is brought about.

Suggested Reforms.—As the land is the source of all industry, and the organisation of industry is so complex, it is not surprising that land reformers differ among themselves as to the true methods. Their views appear to be shaped largely by the opinions they hold on social matters generally. Some think that no comprehensive change needs to be made, but that a number of minor adjustments are all that is wanted. Some again believe that if the laws that do treat land as a commodity distinct from other forms of property were repealed, so that there could be “free trade in land,” all would be well. The more drastic remedies advocated are the Taxation of Land Values, the Nationalisation of Land and the full Socialist programme.

Taxation of Land Values.—The advocates of this reform base themselves on the principle, acknowledged in all systems of economics, that land proper, that is, apart from the improvements which men have wrought, is not the creation of individuals, is necessary for all,

and derives its value either from nature or from the social developments which are due to industry in general, and not to individuals in particular. From this it is inferred that the value should belong to the nation, and should be claimable by taxation. It is urged that such a course would not only restore to the community that which is really its own, thereby relieving other taxation to a corresponding amount, but would also prevent the withholding of land from useful and profitable occupation, so stimulating all industry and absorbing those who are at present unemployed. In answer to the contention mentioned above that much agricultural land has no value in itself, it is said that in such case it would not be taxed, and the owner would be relieved of some at least of his present taxes levied upon his improvements and capital expenditure.

The clearest case for this appears to be that of Site Values as separate from agricultural, and many towns are claiming the right to levy rates upon these. Certainly it is the growth of the town itself, and the municipal services, which make the values to rise without the owner even being able to do anything. Any work done by him would not be on the position, but on the buildings or the laying out, and this is allowed by the land taxers to lie outside the scope of the taxation proposed.

The advocates of the "Single Tax" hold that all rates and taxes fall eventually on land, and that it is more economical to assess them directly upon it, avoiding the evils due to roundabout collection.

Nationalisation of Land.—Using the same arguments as the above, land nationalisers contend further that the

use of the land is more important to the nation than the receipt of the rent in lessening other taxation. They do not usually accept the sanguine estimates of the stimulus to industry by forcing unused land into use, but insist that the great thing needed is to remove the individual power over the way in which it is handled. The object of the individual owner, even when it is forced into use, is to obtain the greatest surplus of income over expenditure. This is not at all necessarily the same thing as supporting the greatest number of people or producing the greatest amount of foodstuffs and other goods. Also, many uses are not at all to the profit of the individual but necessary for the nation, the return coming diffusely through benefits reaped by the community in its general activities, as in the case of highways and other communal benefits which show no direct return in the books of the authorities responsible.

Moreover, they see in such a reform the only way of freeing the rural working classes from the dominion which is asserted by many to be more detrimental to true freedom than the serfdom of the feudal period.

The Socialist Solution.—The Socialist would accept the arguments of the land nationaliser for the nationalisation of the land, but argues further that ownership by the nation and prescription of the conditions of its use by private enterprise are not enough. There is no guarantee that the condition of the hired workers, or "proletariat" would be secured against the existing evils. Therefore he claims that having obtained possession of the land the nation must proceed to use it for the direct good of all, to the displacement

of enterprise for private profit. He looks to a national organisation of industry which is applied to the direct satisfaction of the needs of the whole people, and in which all shall take their part, and be fitted to take their part by equal opportunities of developing their powers. There is difference of view as to the exact principle on which the results shall be distributed.

Some General Criticisms.—It is evident that criticisms of these schemes must take note of two distinct considerations. One is concerned with the justice and economic practicability of the reforms suggested ; the other has regard to the possibility of getting a sufficient force of public conviction behind them to make them valid, and the steps by which they must be reached.

For the first, the reader must be referred to the great body of literature which is available on all three. None of them can be properly appreciated through the bare statement here possible. Much mischief is done by people either criticising or advocating what they have not first taken the trouble to understand.

For the second, it is evident, even from the bare statement, that these form a kind of progression. If it be right, it is more practicable to tax the true land value than to acquire the entire land in full. Probably the Taxation of Land Values would make the full acquisition more practicable ; in any case it would prove in actual working whether it were needed or not. In the same way, if we were led on to nationalise the land, it might prove a sufficient means of checking the evils of private enterprise while retaining the good effects claimed for competition. If the reverse were the case it would be more feasible to go on from it to

the organisation of industry on a national basis. It is clear that for the full realisation of Socialisation there is needed not only the hearty assent of at least a great majority of the nation, but many steps are required to transform one system into another, and the productive industries must be maintained in full swing all the time. Any wholesale interference, if of the nature of a cataclysm, would lead to wholesale starvation.

The Christian Point of View.—The economic arguments which must have great part in the settlement of the Land Question are not the concern of the Christian religion as such. But it has become clear that moral considerations are inextricably interwoven with these. There is the claim of the present owners for justice in anything that may be done ; there is also the claim of the vast masses who are being continually wronged if the contentions of the land reformers are well-based. The Christian citizen must avoid hasty conclusions, however convenient, and search to “see whether these things are so.” He must not confuse existing law with eternal right ; it is the citizen’s part to shape the law as it ought to be, which means for the Christian the will of God. It is not merely that “Justice must be done though the heavens fall” ; rather must it be done because it is an eternal part of the kingdom of Heaven.

The Bible is full of sayings on this land question, which need careful study in order to get through the immediate application to local circumstances right to the heart of their meaning. One thing should be continually kept in mind ; that is the passage which is graven on the front of our Royal Exchange, in

London : "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." ¹ It must therefore be used altogether for His purposes, which include all men, and not a favoured few. Neither may we fear that the fulness will be endangered by using it according to those principles which we sometimes allow to be high and holy, but suspect of being not quite practical enough for "business." Looked at from the larger national point of view the outcome of many "practical" customs has been costly failure, while from the Christian standpoint it has been far worse. It is our business to work out the better way.

¹ Psa. xxiv. 1 ; Exod. ix. 29 ; Deut. x. 14 ; 1 Cor. x. 26.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHURCH AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

IN the foregoing chapters it has become increasingly evident that there is really a social problem of the most pressing nature, and that every part of it has a living relation to the Christian faith. It will be convenient to gather up the main elements of what we may call the challenge which it makes to the Church, before going on to consider what should be the part taken by the Church in response.

The Challenge.—We are not bound to reply to all who assume a right to question, but there are three quarters from which the challenge comes with a compelling force.

1. *The Challenge of the Broken Lives.*—The children who die in their first year in such terrible proportion, sometimes one out of every four; the millions who are without sufficient food to maintain their strength, proper clothing for health and decency, or household space in which to make a home; the breadwinners compelled to cease their earning by sickness that would not have come but for the foulness of social conditions; the multitudes of steady, industrious toilers who lose their work through no fault of their

own, and see their homes crumbling irreparably away; the other multitudes whose moral stamina yields to the incessant and subtle pressure; the increasing myriads of feeble-minded, defectives and lunatics—all these make pitiful if not always conscious appeal to mere ordinary human sympathy and indignation, if men have once been induced to see them as they are. To that love which is the first-named fruit of the Spirit, the cry, "Come over and help us," is irresistible. In the past the magnitude and intensity of the need have not been seen, because the multitudes of the stricken have been herded in their own quarters, and because custom and use have been as a mist before our eyes. To-day the actual conditions are becoming more and more unveiled. The Church of Christ is challenged in her love, and in her sense of right.

2. The Challenge of other Religions.—Christianity is a missionary religion, or it is nothing. It claims a universal Lord and a message of glad tidings to all men. The missionaries who go out from us are telling of pictures of English slums, circulated among those to whom they are bringing the Gospel, with questions printed beneath such as this: England has had the Christian religion for more than a thousand years, and still makes her poor live like this; do you want these things here? Students from all lands come to our country to study and investigate, and return to tell of the contrast between what the missionaries say about love and right, and what is actually done among those who send them. The missionary and the social problems are inextricably intertwined for the Church.

3. *The Challenge of the Church's Lord.*—This is the most forceful of all. It is impossible to gather up all in His teaching that brings it home. Three or four main points may be taken.

Neglect of those who suffer is neglect of Himself. "Inasmuch as ye did it, or did it not, unto these least, ye did it, or did it not, unto Me."¹ He has rights in these broken lives which are infringed by their brokenness. The reply that they are themselves in fault is no answer to this. He came that they might have life abundantly,² and all causes to the contrary must be swept away. If we do not recognise and act upon this, it shows that we ourselves do not really belong to Him, and must be of those to whom is said "Depart,"³ for we are already alien.

The prime object of Christian effort is the Kingdom or Rule or Governance of God, and His Righteousness.⁴ These things which constitute the Social Problem are the things which defy His rule and His right. It is His will that not one of the little feeble ones should perish.⁵ This Kingdom of God is not far off in place or time, but in our midst.⁶ Its order, right, and consequent fulness of life are at hand, waiting for us to give them effect. No doubt they go far beyond the things that affect the body, and will have wonderful expansions beyond this present life, but that does not alter the fact that they are flouted in the present life and in the social disorder. No one can really put God's Kingdom in front of his own comfort

¹ Matt. xxv. 40-45.

³ Matt. xxv. 41.

⁵ *Ibid.* xviii. 14.

² John x. 10.

⁴ *Ibid.* vi. 33.

⁶ Luke xvii. 21, &c.

or personal ambitions and ignore the challenge concerning God's Kingdom in social affairs.

We are to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.¹ This has indeed been strangely interpreted to imply a separation of civic from religious life; and it is the more remarkable in being a favourite interpretation with those who otherwise insist on the necessity of giving their whole life to God. If it be true that "His Kingdom ruleth over all,"² it can only be the right thing to render unto Cæsar what belongs to him because that comes into the whole plan of life. Civic duties are enjoined and consecrated by this teaching, not secularised. But to-day we are ourselves Cæsar; the responsibility of our common governance is upon our shoulders, and we neglect it at our peril. As Cæsar we have to render unto God what belongs to Him in just laws and customs, and in merciful dealing with all. It is not only a question of paying rates and taxes; it means also rendering faithful citizenship in full. Laws are no longer imposed upon us by an alien will; we are ourselves responsible not only for choosing the men who make or unmake them, but for the general trend and purpose of the actual statutes which they enact. We are responsible for the executive and local governments which carry them out or neglect them. A really Christian Cæsar will make his Kingdom part of the Kingdom of God.

Because Christ is now at the heart of all things, "gone to the Father," the Church is to do "greater things."³ The same kind of things as were done by

¹ Mark xii. 17.

² Psal. ciii. 19.

³ John xiv. 12.

that one human body which He used, but on the larger scale and with the deeper social application that His central and abiding inspiration of a ubiquitous Church has made possible. The programme of the Messiah given in the Gospels is the programme of the Church. In the working out of the conception of the Church as the Body of Christ it is noticeable that the parts mentioned for illustration are not the passive parts only which need cleansing and adorning, nor even the tongue for preaching, but most conspicuously the active members; the eye and ear for getting information and discovering the need, and the foot and the hand for going where the need calls, and acting upon it.¹

So far from social activity and social righteousness being at all alien to the truly spiritual life, it is found to be, however we approach it in Christ's teaching, the necessary fruit of the redeemed spirit. It is not indeed a way of purchasing our own redemption, or of "acquiring merit," but it is the way in which the redeemed life naturally acts, and so is a test of the reality of redemption. It is also a way of "working out our own salvation,"² which has first of all been given to us.

The Response of the Church.—As a matter of fact, in spite of many gibes to the contrary, the Church has always been more or less alive to these things. In other ages it has taken great part in compelling governments to what at any rate it believed to be right, even though we may not now always agree that it was. In all times it has encouraged its individual members

¹ 1 Cor. xii.

² Phil. ii. 12.

to personal helpfulness towards the poor and unfortunate, and the great benefactions have been the work of Christians mainly. Also, it may be claimed that great multitudes of those who have spent themselves unselfishly in the public service have received their impulse through the teaching of the Church. If it can be said on the other side that very many who are at least nominally Christian have been as selfish and grasping as any, it must be remembered that this is the infection of the Church by the world; the establishment of Christianity as an official religion has brought in great numbers who do not really belong.

What is needed now is the discerning of the signs of the times, so that the newer conditions may be met with the suitable methods, many of which are only beginning to be possible. It is only recently that the mass of the people have had the duties of Cæsar open to them, and even yet it is only a minority of grown men and women who can register a definite decision. But all have influence, and in many cases this is of far greater moment than a vote.

Cautions.—Besides those who for ulterior reasons are desirous that the Church should, as they say, "Mind its own business," there are many sincere Christians who honestly dread the Church being led from its primary concern of setting forth the love of God in Christ and the winning of men and women to personal reconciliation with Him, and also its being entangled in the mean and sordid things of party politics. This has not merely to be respected as an honest opinion, but to be recognised as the discernment of a real danger. Whatever is done must be as a result of the

Spirit's working, and not as a substitute for the deeper things of life. Also, there is a definite function of the State which is not the function of the Church. The ages in which the Church dictated to the State officially are not, as we now see them, the most conspicuous for genuine religion, and to-day there is already too much political influence wielded within the Church in defence of the interests of certain classes. It may fairly be asked that if the Church is forbidden to attack social unrighteousness in the name of the Lord, she should also be forbidden to defend it in His name, merely because it happens to be of old standing. But it is a warning against any action that lets the spirit of party into the Church, instead of bringing the Christian spirit to the purifying and ennobling of politics.

Christian Citizenship.—Since the members of the Church are also members of the State, and as such have the responsibility of sharing in its decisions and activities, it is clearly the duty of the Church to see that they are properly equipped for carrying out this duty as part of their loyalty to Christ. This follows both because it is among the things for which they must "give an account"¹ and because the things which are becoming increasingly the very substance of citizenship to-day are exactly those things which Christ set before them as the business of the members of His Kingdom.

There are three things which should be specially cared for by the Church in this training of Christian citizens: Study, Service and Prayer. These three

¹ Luke xvi. 2 ; Rom. xiv. 12.

ought to be closely interwoven, for each without the others is in danger of losing its soul. Study by itself becomes academic and theoretical ; moreover, "Knowledge puffeth up."¹ Service that is only doing tends to become stereotyped, or fussy, or even mischievous, as in the case of much that is called charity. Prayer that is severed from service and knowledge is perhaps the worst of all, in that the degradation of the highest is always the most deadly.

Service.—Already there is more true social service being rendered by the members of Churches than is commonly recognised, even in the Churches themselves. The trouble is that it is so scattered and individual that even those who render it frequently do so without consciously relating it to their definitely Christian life. Membership of a Town Council, Education Committee, Board of Guardians, or one of those increasingly numerous bodies of volunteer helpers which public executives are setting up for co-operation in administration, is too often a thing apart. If all the Christians who have place in our Parliament and other public bodies went there avowedly, to themselves and others, as "fellow-workers with God,"² their work would be immensely more effective, and there would not be so much of that perplexing doubleness of standard which we find to-day. The Church might do much more for these, in recognition of the Christian nature of the work itself, and in maintaining the high ideals of their service.

Then there is a rapid transformation coming over what has been known as charitable work, or philan-

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 1.

² *Ibid.* iii. 9.

thropy. Guilds of Help, Social Welfare Councils, and similar organisations are replacing the separate charities, and seeking by co-ordination and mutual knowledge to obviate the grosser evils and make the help truly effective. The Church can do much to supply trained workers for these things, and to keep their service in touch with the Source of Inspiration. Settlements and other organisations of the kind need to be kept supplied with workers and with the necessary means, as serving the Church in regions where the local means are narrow and the needs exceedingly great. Above all, this service requires the full recognition of definite business of the Church of Christ, instead of being left to sporadic bursts of sympathy under the power of an occasional individual appeal. Honour should be given to it, not for the workers' sake, but because it is the service the Lord requires.

The Church has tried to attract, by many methods directed to the pleasures of those she seeks. Probably she will attract still more by offering ways of service instead of occasions of being served.

Study.—We have been learning of late that service in the Sunday School needs adequate preparation. This is quite as true of social service. It needs to be twofold. On the one hand the Bible itself needs to be searched carefully for the teaching given on these things ; for their true relation to the Kingdom of God, and what the teaching of Christ and His apostles means when honestly worked out with regard to present-day duties. On the other hand, the facts themselves and as much of their meaning as has been

discovered must be studied, as they have been gathered and sifted by competent investigators. The actual conditions in one's own neighbourhood should be observed, so that book information becomes alive with first-hand knowledge.

Study Circles have been proved and gradually perfected in connection with Mission Study. They are the most effective method of Social Study also. While not at first so attractive as public lectures, they yield greater results in the end. All the sections of the Church are now getting their Social Service Unions or Committees, and these offer all needful information concerning the best methods and the most suitable books.

Prayer.—Many people have grown suspicious, even contemptuous, of prayer meetings. They are too often lacking in that power of life that is their proper justification. But we cannot do without the real gold because of base coin. The right kind of prayer is just relating all our wants and aspirations to the Divine Will and the Divine Power. Therefore all study should be combined with the definite seeking of the Will of God concerning the facts which have been the subject-matter of the discussion. This is the corrective of personal and party bias. Whatever may be the political or other prepossessions out in the world, inside the Church these must be laid aside to discover what things look like in the Divine Light, and what we must aim at as servants of Christ. This is the great gift which the Church can make to the world; citizens who have become charged with something at least of the Divine purpose.

Probably for a long time we must work as citizens through the political parties that seem to us to be nearest to this purpose, but it will make a great difference if we bring into these parties the spirit we have gained in these ways. Sooner or later it will transform the parties themselves, and perhaps make the party system itself obsolete.

The Church as Prophet.—Besides the training of its members as citizens, the Church as a corporate body seems to have a duty of prophesying, in the true sense of speaking forth for God. Political sermons and political resolutions have been often condemned, and in the present writer's judgment rightly so. But there is a great and valid difference between *the methods* by which results are sought to be attained, which is the function of the State, not the Church, and the *great objects* for the attainment of which the Church ought to call at least its own citizen members to work, study, and pray. Drunkenness, vice, starvation, degradation, injustice, and oppression are all foes of God's Kingdom as well as scourges of man. Correspondingly, sobriety, purity, security of life and means, health and sanity are the objects both of God's ministers and of statesmen alike. The Church must be the channel of the Spirit by which these things can be accomplished, the prophet that inspires a nation to righteousness, always seeing the vision of the City of God and declaring it, until "the kingdoms of the world are become the Kingdom of our Lord." ¹

¹ Rev. xi. 15.

BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

THIS list makes no pretence at completeness ; it consists of books within reach of those with moderate purses, and representing various points of view. Some of them are marked with an asterisk as containing useful bibliographies, and the student will not have gone far without becoming acquainted with the names of the leading authorities.

CHAPTER I

- "Poverty." B. Seebohm Rowntree. (Macmillan.) 1s. net.
* "Poverty." Will Reason. (Headley.) 1s. and 1s. 6d. net.
"Social Degradation." Malcolm Spencer. (Student Christian Movement.) 1s. net.
"Riches and Poverty." L. Chiozza Money. (Methuen.) 1s. net.
"At the Works." Lady Bell. (Nelson.) 1s. net.
"How the Casual Labourer Lives." (Northern Publishing Company.) 1s.
"Life in West London." Arthur Sherwell. (Methuen.) 2s. 6d. net.
Consult also Charles Booth, "Life and Labour in London," and the special studies of West Ham, Norwich, Cambridge, Dundee, &c. Also Miss Davies, "Life in an English Village." These are mostly more expensive books.

CHAPTER II

(In addition to List for Chapter I)

- "Rich and Poor." Mrs. Bosanquet. (Macmillan.) 3s. 6d. net.
"Circumstance or Character?" C. F. Rogers. (Methuen.) 2s. 6d. net.
(From the Charity Organisation Society point of view.)

CHAPTER III

- * "Child Life and Labour." Margaret Alden, M.D. (Headley.)
1s. and 1s. 6d. net.
- "Wastage of Child Life." J. Johnston. (Fifield.) 1s.
- "Early Childhood." Margaret Macmillan. (Sonnenschein.) 3s.
- "The Infant, the Parent, and the State." H. Ll. Heath. (King.)
3s. 6d. net.
- "The Town Child." R. A. Bray. (Fisher Unwin.) 3s. 6d. net.
- "Studies of Boy Life." E. J. Urwick (ed.) (Dent.) 3s. 6d. net.
- "The Growing Generation." Barclay Baron. (Student Christian
Movement.) 1s.

CHAPTER IV

- * "Housing." P. Alden and E. Hayward. (Headley.) 1s. and
1s. 6d. net.
- "Housing of the Working Classes." M. Kaufman. (Jack.) 1s.
- "Practical Housing." J. S. Nettlefold. (Garden City Press.) 1s.
net.
- "The Example of Germany." T. C. Horsfall. (Manchester
University Press.) 1s.
- "The Cottage Homes of England." W. W. Crotch. (Industrial
Pub. Co.) 1s. net.
- "Garden Cities of To-morrow." E. Howard. (Sonnenschein.)
1s. net.
- "Housing Problem." A. St. L. Toke. (King.) 6d. net.

CHAPTER V

- * "The Health of the State." Geo. Newman. (Headley.) 1s.
and 1s. 6d. net.
- "Dawn of the Health Age." Benjamin Moore. (Churchill.) 1s. net.
- "Conquest of Consumption." Latham and Garland. (Fisher
Unwin.)
- "Interdepartmental Committee Report on Physical Deteriora-
tion. (Wyman.) 1s. 2d. net.

CHAPTER VI

- "The Children." A. Darroch. (Jack.) 1s. net.
- "The Child and the State." Margaret Macmillan. (National
Labour Press.) 1s. net.

- "Labour and Childhood." Margaret Macmillan. (Sonnen-schein.) 2s. 6d.
- "The School." J. J. Findlay. (Williams and Norgate.) 1s. net.
- "What is and what might be." E. Holmes. (Constable.) 4s. 6d. net.
- "Education and National Life." Henry Dyer. (Blackie.) 1s. net.

CHAPTER VII

- "What the Worker Wants." By various writers. (Hodder.) 6d. net.
- "Causes of Labour Unrest." W. Cunningham. (Murray.) 6d. net.
- "The Labour Movement." L. T. Hobhouse. (Fisher Unwin.) 1s. (1912 ed.) net.
- "Theory and Practice of Trade Unionism." J. H. Greenwood. (Fifield.) 1s.
- "Eight Hours' Day." S. Webb and H. Cox. (Walter Scott.) 1s.
- "The Workers' Handbook." Gertrude Tuckwell and Constance Smith. (Duckworth.) 3s. 6d. net.

CHAPTER VIII

- "The Living Wage." Philip Snowden. (Hodder.) 1s. net.
- "A Living Wage." J. A. Ryan. (Macmillan.) 2s. net.
- *"Sweating." Cadbury and Shann. Headley. 1s. net.
- "Women's Work and Wages. Cadbury, Matheson, and Shann. (Fisher Unwin.) 1s.
- "Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage." Clementina Black. (Duckworth.) 3s. 6d. net.
- "Sweated Labour and the Trades Boards Act." Thos. Wright (ed.). (King.) 6d. net.

CHAPTER IX

- *"The Unemployable and the Unemployed." Alden and Hayward. (Headley.) 1s. and 1s. 6d. net.
- "The Unemployed." Percy Alden. (King.) 2s.
- "Unemployment and Trade Unions." Cyril Jackson. (Longman's.) 1s. and 1s. 6d. net.
- "Our Industrial Outcasts." Will Reason (ed.) (Melrose.) 2s.
- "Insurance against Unemployment." D. J. Schloss. (King.) 3s. 6d. net.
- "Unemployment Insurance." I. C. Gibson. (King.) 6s. net.

- "Unemployment." W. H. Beveridge. (Longman's.) 7s. 6d. net. (For advanced students.)
 "Minority Report on Poor Law." Part II. (Nat. Com. to promote Break-up of Poor Law.) 1s. net.

CHAPTER X

- "Minority Report." Part I. (Nat. Com. to promote Break-up of Poor Law.) 1s. net.
 "Poor Law Report of 1909." Mrs. Bosanquet. (Macmillan.) 1s. net.
 "Destitution." Henry Carter. (Wesleyan Union for Social Service.) 3d. net.
 "Destitution and Suggested Remedies." Monsignor Parkinson. (King.) 6d. net.
 "Problem of the Feeble-minded." Sir Ed. Fry (ed.). (King.) 1s. net.
 * "Feeble-mindedness in Children." C. Paget Lapage. (Manchester University Press.) 5s. net.
 "Psychology and Crime." Thos. Holmes. (Dent.) 1s. net.
 "The Making of the Criminal." Russell and Rigby. (Macmillan.) 3s. 6d. net.
 "Crime and Criminals." R. F. Quintin, M.D. 4s. 6d. net.
 "Path of Social Progress." Mrs. Kerr. (Nelson.) 2s. net.

CHAPTER XI

- * "The Land and the Landless." Cadbury and Bryan. (Headley.) 1s. and 1s. 6d. net.
 "The Land, the People, and the State." Sir G. Parker and R. Dawson. (Sowter.) 1s. net.
 "To Colonise England." C. F. G. Masterman and others. (Fisher Unwin.) 1s.
 "Awakening of England." F. S. Green. (Nelson.) 2s. net.
 "Land Nationalisation." A. R. Wallace. (Sonnenschein.) 1s.
 "Taxation of Land Values." John Orr. (King.) 1s. net.
 "Land Nationalisation and Land Taxation." Harold Cox. (Methuen.) 3s. 6d. net.

Publications of Land Nationalisation Society.

Publications of League for Taxation of Land Values.

For Socialism see the Socialist Library, (Independent Labour Party), also Fabian Society.

CHAPTER XII

- "Christian Citizenship." W. E. Chadwick. (Mowbray.) 1s. 6d. and 2s. net.
- "The Church and Social Problems." A. Scott Matheson. (Oliphant.) 3s. 6d. net.
- "The Church and the New Age." Henry Carter. (Hodder.) 2s. 6d. net.
- "Social Problems and the Church's Duty." David Watson. (Black.) 6d. net.
- "Jesus Christ and the Social Question." F. G. Peabody. (Macmillan.) 6d. net.
- "Christianity and the Social Crisis." Prof. Rauschenbusch. (Macmillan.) 2s. net.
- "The Christian Church That Is To Be." John Firm. (Headley.) 1s. net.

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